EVALUATION OF THE FAMILY PLANNING LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT II (FPLM II) PROJECT (936-3038)

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by

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CCMIS	Contraceptive Commodity Management Information System
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CLM	Commodity and Logistics Management Division
COP	Chief of Party
CQI	Condom Quality Index
CPT	Contraceptive Procurement Table
CTO	Cognizant Technical Officer
DGPF	Direccion General de Planificacion Familiar
FP	Family Planning
FPLM	Family Planning Logistics Management
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
GOZ	Government of Zimbabwe
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ISO	International Standards Organization
ISTI	International Science and Technology Institute, Inc.
JSI	John Snow, Inc.
LA	Logistics Advisor
LMIS	Logistics Management Information System
MEXFAM	Fundacion Mexicana para Planificacion Familiar
MIS	Management Information System
NGO	Nongovernmental Organization
PATH	Program for Appropriate Technology in Health
PMT	Project Management Team
PPD	Population Projects Database
PROFAMILIA	Asociacion Probienestar de la Familia Colombiana
PVO	Private Voluntary Organization
QA	Quality Assurance
RFP	Request for Proposal
RLA	Regional Logistics Advisor
SLC	Senior Logistics Coordinator
U.S.	United States
USAID	U. S. Agency for International Development

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION DATA

1.	**Project Title:**	Family Planning Logistics Management II (FPLM II) Project
2.	**Country:**	Worldwide
3.	**Project Number:**	936-3038
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	Agreement Signed:	August 31, 1990
	End Date:	August 30, 1995
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	Host Country Funding (buy-ins):	$17,289,003
6.	**Mode of Implementation:**	Contract between the Office of Population, Global Bureau, and the Cooperating Agency (John Snow, Inc.)
7.	**Contractor:**	John Snow, Inc. 1616 North Fort Myer Drive 11th Floor Arlington, VA 22209
8.	**Subcontractors:**	International Science and Technology Institute (ISTI) Program for Appropriate Technology for Health (PATH)
8.	**Responsible USAID Official:**	
	Cognizant Technical Officer:	John Crowley
9.	**Previous Evaluation:**	Beam, Amy, Betty Case, and Douglas Robbins. Evaluation of the NEWVERN Software Component of the Family Planning Logistics Management II Project. Population Technical Assistance Project, Arlington VA, September 11, 1992.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) began providing logistics management assistance to family planning programs in 1974 through an agreement with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Since 1986, the Family Planning Logistics Management (FPLM) project has been implemented through continuing agreements with CDC as well as two competitively awarded contracts, one in 1986 and the second in 1990. Both contracts were awarded to John Snow, Inc. (JSI). The second contract was the focus of this evaluation. Under this contract, JSI/FPLM engages in two kinds of activities: (1) improving contraceptive logistics management capabilities in developing countries and (2) managing central databases. This evaluation was restricted to JSI/FPLM's logistics assistance activities. Conducted from April 25 through May 26, 1994, it involved interviews and document review in the U.S., Mexico, and Bangladesh. In addition, 13 Missions receiving JSI/FPLM services provided input by cable or telephone.

JSI/FPLM has grown considerably since contract start-up in 1990, and its activities have become increasingly diverse within the general scope of work. Committed to a service orientation and responsiveness to field needs, the project has operated successfully in a highly unstable environment, subject to changing USAID interests and priorities as well as shifting landscapes in the many countries in which it works. Clients are generally satisfied with project services, and project staff constantly strives toward quality products and services. The project engages in vigorous outreach throughout the donor and Cooperating Agency community and involves representatives of this community in many of its activities. It has been less vigorous in its outreach to the commercial private sector, limiting its efforts primarily to tracking technologies which have little application in the countries in which JSI/FPLM works.

Project Management

JSI/FPLM's project management staff has not increased proportionately with the general increase in staff size. This economical approach is possible because of the project's commitment to delegation, teamwork, and participative management. This commitment is embodied in eight permanent cross-unit, cross-disciplinary Function Groups and *ad hoc* work teams assigned by Function Groups to specific tasks. As needs for oversight of field-based activities increased, the project responded with new positions at headquarters, stronger backstopping, and a number of other appropriate initiatives.

The project's management philosophy is highly beneficial to the staff. It encourages on-the-job learning, ensures wide dissemination of information, involves staff at all levels in technical discussions, and creates a dynamic, interesting, and challenging work environment. It is beneficial to management as well, allowing senior management staff an opportunity for significant technical as well as administrative involvement. Further, there are significant benefits for the project's many clients, including a cross-disciplinary approach to problem-solving, regular avenues to ensure that lessons learned in one environment are applied as appropriate elsewhere, and a peer review process that subjects analyses, plans, and products to regular internal review.

The management philosophy and the procedures through which it is implemented have some potential weaknesses that merit further study. For example, the evaluation team found no clear locus of quality control. Also, it is unclear that USAID's interests and priorities are reflected in Function Group decisions regarding resource allocation, priority ranking of tasks[*], and technical approaches to various kinds of tasks. Most important, there is currently no way to determine the cost of making decisions, producing products, and controlling quality under the current management system. More information is needed to assess both the efficiency and the effectiveness of this system.

Project Performance and Results

JSI/FPLM has provided virtually the full range of training and technical assistance support services. It has met or expects to meet major contract deliverables. Each country's assistance package is based on needs, the priority of the country as determined by the Commodity and Logistics Management Division of USAID (CLM) and JSI/FPLM, the nature of the request for services, and available resources. There is a strong emphasis on collaboration at the local level, both with recipient institutions and with other Cooperating Agencies. The project engages in ongoing review of its services and products, constantly upgrading and refining them as a result of experience gained in the field. These efforts reflect the project's strong commitment to quality and to meeting the specific needs of each of its clients.

Both CLM and JSI/FPLM lack a strategic focus with respect to logistics assistance services. This makes it very difficult to assess choices about resource allocation and to determine overall if the project's significant training and technical assistance efforts form a cohesive whole that promises long-term impact in the recipient countries. Also, both CLM and JSI/FPLM tend to focus on outputs, such as number of people trained, rather than impact. Thus, despite mention in various project documents of sustainability and long-term system improvements, neither CLM nor JSI/FPLM has any way to measure the ultimate effectiveness or efficiency of project services.

While JSI/FPLM's activities benefit from close consultation with and input from other donors and Cooperating Agencies, they do not incorporate any private sector, developing country commercial experience. Except for three of 52 local hires, no one now on staff has this kind of experience, and the project does not engage in outreach to such individuals at the local level. Input from people who know how to project needs for, purchase, store, and deliver products effectively and efficiently under difficult local conditions could help inform project services and create systems with greater potential for local sustainability.

[*] Tasks are officially designated as priority 1,2, or 3 (with 1 being highest) during all-staff annual planning sessions, with all staff midyear review. However, both project documents and staff interviews confirm that Function Groups have the authority to defer, delay, drop, and add tasks. This authority effectively involves the Groups in assigning priorities because it permits the Groups to decide what gets done and when.

Future Directions for FPLM III

There is no question that there is a continuing need for family planning and AIDS prevention logistics system assistance, but the team is unable to estimate the magnitude of funding CLM should allocate to this program. This is because the needs are essentially limitless, and more data are needed to determine whether or not services can be provided more efficiently.

Regardless of size, the FPLM III design should reflect some new features. These include expanding the project's mandate to include other logistics-related assistance (such as facilities improvements and transportation infrastructure), introducing measures to assess impact and promote sustainability, allowing the project more flexibility to work with integrated health delivery systems where appropriate, and increasing on-staff commercial expertise within the project. In addition, the NEWVERN database should remain within The FPLM Project. There is no programmatic reason for maintaining the Population Projects Database (PPD) within FPLM. CLM needs to investigate the cost of transferring this activity elsewhere and the potential benefits of focusing the project's entire attention on logistics management services.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations for FPLM II

1. Within three months, project management should develop a system to assess management practices in ensuring that the project is maximally responsive to CLM's priorities and assess (1) the efficiency of current management practices and (2) the effectiveness of current subject to adequate technical oversight. Quarterly thereafter, project management should share these findings with CLM. If the assessment reveals that modifications would result in greater efficiency and effectiveness, project management should institute approaches that meet these objectives, are minimally disruptive to current operations, and, at the same time, preserve existing benefits. (Page 16)

2. CLM and JSI/FPLM should establish a clearer understanding and definition of project and country strategies, reflecting a clearer understanding of how they differ from existing work plans. (Page 40)

3. JSI/FPLM strategies and plans should evidence a clear commitment to institutionalization and should stimulate the development of systems and procedures that are realistically sustainable within the local environment. Examples of areas in which such attention could be placed are the following:

    - Developing a strategy to transfer capability to prepare contraceptive procurement tables (CPTs) in more client countries.

    - Transferring the full training process, including needs assessment, design, delivery, and evaluation.

    - Designing management systems with local takeover in mind. (Page 40)

4. JSI/FPLM planning should result in country interventions that reflect better balance and coordination between training and technical assistance. (Page 40)

5. JSI/FPLM should introduce a more practical, hands-on emphasis into its in-country training and technical assistance activities. (Page 40)

6. JSI/FPLM should refine its resource allocation procedures to improve the balance between planning and implementation of services. (Page 40)

Recommendations for FPLM III

7. CLM should ensure that FPLM III takes a broader view of logistics management, allowing support for a wider range of activities, including such areas as facilities improvement and transportation needs. (Page 42)

8. CLM should establish performance measures rather than deliverables and output measures to help guide and evaluate the project. (Page 44)

9. CLM should continue its initiative to link logistics support for HIV/AIDS prevention with logistics support for contraceptives. In countries where integration is desirable or under way, FPLM III should be permitted to provide support to integrated systems. (Page 44)

10. There are programmatic reasons for continuing to link the NEWVERN management process with logistics management assistance under a single contract. However, the case is less compelling for the PPD. Therefore, CLM should determine whether the funding for the PPD could be better spent in direct logistics support activities. (Page 45)

11. To ensure that FPLM III benefits from direct, hands-on, practical private sector logistics and material management experience in developing countries, CLM should mandate in the next Request for Proposal (RFP) that the successful offeror employ on the project a sufficient number of staff persons with this kind of experience. (Page 45)

1. INTRODUCTION

The Family Planning Logistics Management (FPLM) Project is a key element in the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) population assistance program. Its primary objective to is strengthen contraceptive logistics management in family planning and HIV/AIDS control programs. The project is managed by the Commodity and Logistics Management (CLM) Division of USAID's Office of Population. The Office of Population began providing logistics management assistance to family planning programs in 1974 through an agreement with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), now the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Since 1986, the project has been implemented through continuing agreements with CDC as well as two competitively awarded contracts. Both contracts were awarded to John Snow, Inc. (JSI). The focus of this evaluation is on the second contract, effective August 31, 1990 to August 30, 1995. There are two subcontractors: International Science and Technology Institute, Inc. (ISTI) and the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH). The CDC agreement and the JSI contract are designed to be complementary. While both organizations provide logistics assistance, support for technical database management is exclusive to JSI, while contraceptive prevalence surveys and epidemiological studies are exclusive to CDC.

FPLM as a whole includes the following: (1) development, institutionalization, and assessment of developing country logistics management systems; (2) estimation of future contraceptive requirements for USAID-supported family planning and HIV/AIDS control programs; and (3) technical support to USAID's centralized contraceptive procurement system and Population Projects Database (PPD). The contraceptive procurement management information system is called NEWVERN.

Under the contract, JSI/FPLM engages in two kinds of activities: (1) improving contraceptive logistics management capabilities in developing countries and (2) managing NEWVERN and the PPD. The contract establishes objectives at both field and USAID/Washington levels. The field objectives are the following:

- Strengthen country family planning program capacity to manage and implement efficient contraceptive logistics systems.
- Strengthen commitment among family planning program managers and administrators to establish more efficient logistics systems.
- Institutionalize the capability to forecast contraceptive needs and, where appropriate, seek alternative sources of supply within client countries.
- Develop local capacity for sound quality assurance.

The project design contemplated assistance to AIDS control programs through a buy-in by the Office of Health.

The USAID/Washington objectives for the Office of Population are the following:

- Continue implementation of NEWVERN and PPD.
- Undertake special analyses on cross-cutting issues.

Approximately 60 percent of project resources are devoted to improving logistics management capabilities, and the evaluation Scope of Work confines the evaluation focus to these activities.

The core contract totals $20,008,753. There are six buy-ins under a companion Q contract totaling $17,170,002.

JSI/FPLM now has a home office staff of 27, with two additional positions vacant. It has eight expatriate advisors in three regional offices (Harare, Dakar, and Bogota) and four buy-in country offices (Dhaka, Nairobi, Bamako, and Manila). The overseas offices collectively have 52 local staff members.

2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

This project has grown and diversified since its inception in 1990. JSI/FPLM has undertaken a number of initiatives to manage this growth effectively. These initiatives reflect a commitment to good management and accountability to the client.

This section describes JSI/FPLM's management structure and style, highlights strengths and issues associated with management practices, and presents one recommendation related to project management.

2.1 Structure

The JSI/FPLM management structure as illustrated on the project organization chart (see Figure 1) is fairly standard. The chart shows logical units of staff with related technical or administrative functions. There is no structural or operational distinction between JSI and subcontractor staff, aside from the administrative aspects of subcontract management. Within most units, there are various levels of staff with explicit supervisory and reporting lines. The exception is the group of six logistics advisors, each of whom reports to the deputy director for field activities. There is no hierarchy within this unit as there is in the training group, although some advisors clearly are more experienced than others and could serve in a senior supervisory capacity.

The only remarkable factor about the chart itself is the disproportionate number of people supervised by and reporting to the deputy director for field activities. This creates a relatively flat, horizontal structure in the largest portion of the project. The fact that project management has created the new senior logistics coordinator positions is evidence of its recognition that project growth has placed an unreasonable and unmanageable burden on this deputy. However, even if the two vacant senior logistics coordinator positions were filled, this deputy would still directly supervise 11 people in the home office, as well as oversee the two subcontractors. With the positions vacant, this deputy supervises 14 people, five of whom are overseas.

The number of boxes on the chart exceeds the number of people on staff, now 27, because nine[1] individuals occupy multiple boxes. This is the strategy management has chosen in response to the special demands on a project with significant operations both at home and in the field and with varying sets of tasks that require less than full-time attention and/or are variable. It also takes advantage of the fact that several advisors have special skills in key technical areas and can provide guidance in these areas throughout the project's diverse activities. In addition, it provides for cross-trained staff persons who can provide home office coverage when others are out of the office on overseas travel assignments. This general approach is not unique to FPLM, but it does result in over 20 percent of the staff having more than one supervisor.

[1]Wilson, Thomas, Perry, Ampeh, Wildman, Toumbou, Chovitz, Kruhm, and Kooney.

Of the nine people with multiple titles, three hold two advisor positions, each of which reports to the deputy director for field activities. One is both management information system (MIS) advisor and logistics advisor, another is quality assurance (QA)/AIDS advisor and logistics advisor, and the third is demographer and logistics advisor. Of the other individuals with multiple positions, four are part of the management strategy to provide consistent backstopping services to the field. Three of the program associates in the administration unit are also field backstoppers, as is the financial officer in the same unit. One of the associates backstops three field operations, another backstops two, and the third backstops one. The financial officer also backstops one. Thus, according to Figure 1, each of these individuals reports to more than one person. In addition, the program associate who backstops three field operations also serves as contraceptive procurement table (CPT) database manager, reporting to the deputy director for field activities, and the program associate backstopping one field operation also acts as assistant CPT database manager, reporting to the CPT database manager (who is also a program associate in the administration unit).

The remaining staff with multiple positions includes a program associate in the administration unit who also backstops training services (reporting to the training advisors) and a staff associate in the administration unit (reporting to the administrator) who also acts as an assistant CPT database manager (reporting to the CPT database manager who is also a program associate).

FPLM has a Project Management Team (PMT), consisting of the director, the two deputies, and the administrator. The PMT is responsible for contract management, personnel management, and arbitration of disputes about authority, technical issues, and resource allocation that the Function Groups described below cannot resolve. However, the position descriptions of the three PMT members directly involved in field activities collectively impart many more responsibilities to this group. Among others, these include liaison with CDC, CLM, other USAID units, and other donors and related organizations; daily liaison with the Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO); review and approval of country work plans and strategies; subcontractor technical management; technical support to staff; periodic evaluation of activity appropriateness and impact; and various administrative and financial operations.

JSI/FPLM also has a series of eight Function Groups, each of which has a coordinator and includes a member of the PMT. Not all JSI-managed projects are organized in this way. With the exception of the administration group that has only one member from outside the structural administration unit, the Function Groups are generally cross-disciplinary, cross-unit groups. Project documents and interviews with project staff members reveal slightly different definitions of Function Group responsibilities. Thus, the purpose and objectives are not entirely clear. Key functions mentioned include task definition and planning, routine progress tracking, task assignment within the Group (and work team formation as appropriate), improving tools, technical guidance, resource allocation, information sharing, idea generation, staff development, and "empowering/involving" staff in technical activities. Function Groups also decide what tasks are deferred, delayed, dropped, and added. These activities involve the Function Groups in resource allocation decisions. Any staff member may attend any Function Group meeting, regardless of whether or not he or she is a regular member of the Group. A Function Group may meet in full or in part, depending on the subject matter and the availability of members. Meeting minutes are available to all staff members.

Membership in Function Groups is voluntary, though project staff reports an unwritten rule of thumb that says participation in one Group is not enough, the average is three or four Groups, and participation in five Groups is probably too much. However, over one-third of the staff persons fall

outside this rule. Of the 27 people on staff, six (22 percent) serve on five or more Groups, with one participating in six. Of these staff members, three are program associates with multiple responsibilities for administration, backstopping, and/or CPT database management. The other three are the deputy director for field activities, one of the training advisors, and the QA/AIDS/logistics advisor. Also, there are four people (14 percent) who serve on only one Group. These are the PPD manager, assistant PPD manager, one of the logistics advisors, and the financial officer.[2]

The Function Groups are consistent with the project's functional activities and serve as an excellent forum for exchange of information and ideas. They also help surface key issues in program implementation that are germane throughout the field and/or affect more than one activity, such as training and technical assistance. In addition, they have a fairly explicit staff development function, supplementing JSI/FPLM's more formal staff training programs. According to the staff, the Function Groups provide a level playing field where junior staff members feel their inputs are valued and where all staff members can broaden their skills and improve their individual capacities to help achieve project objectives. In addition, these Groups are one of the project's many mechanisms to promote internal communication and enhance overall project coordination. Most important, they represent management's commitment to delegation and to the value of team work.

In implementing work plans, the Function Groups create work teams responsible for completing designated tasks. Each team reports to its sponsoring Group. Members of the team can come from within or outside of the Group. As with the Function Groups themselves, participation in the teams is voluntary. While project management can track each individual's activities through the ENFORCER database, the project's philosophy is to rely generally on each individual's judgment as to how much and what kind of work he or she will undertake. Moreover, the ENFORCER contains no level of effort data and therefore is not a workload indicator or monitor.

JSI/FPLM designates a country monitor for each country in which the project works. Usually this individual serves concurrently as the lead technical assistance provider to that country. The Field Activities Function Group has recently assigned a work team to develop a detailed description of country monitor responsibilities. The country monitor is an important element in FPLM's ongoing efforts to ensure consistent and adequate support to each client country. In addition, each regional office and each country with a long-term advisor has a designated home office backstopper who coordinates home office support and ensures that field requests are handled expeditiously.

2.2 Impact of Project Structure on Management Functions

JSI/FPLM's management approach is not entirely unique. There are many other projects and organizations that use participative management, emphasize delegation, apply cross-disciplinary skills to solve problems, and encourage staff development. The major distinctions are two. First, at JSI/FPLM the structures and procedures representing the commitment to delegation, consensus building, and the team approach are permanent and more formal. Second, selected management

[2]The level of participation of the latter two was confirmed in team meetings with the Administration and Field Activities Function Groups respectively.

functions are carried out at lower levels, with responsibilities for these functions more diffuse. The discussion below is limited to these functions which include planning and monitoring; resource allocation; technical oversight and quality control; personnel management; field management; and ensuring sufficient attention to CLM's priorities and concerns. Other functions, such as general administration, contract management, subcontract management, financial management, and administrative backstopping, are generally unaffected. In these areas, JSI/FPLM draws on the well-established systems and procedures established within JSI as a result of the company's extensive experience in administering government contracts. These systems and procedures are strong and well implemented, lending a solid base to this large and complex project.

2.2.1 Planning and Monitoring

Chapter 3 describes the project's all-staff planning and review meetings in January and June. Function Groups are key in defining functional area tasks listed in the annual plans. They also refine these tasks as needed, sometimes creating the special work teams described above. They may add, delete, reschedule, or change tasks. They are required to develop progress tracking mechanisms and monitor progress at least quarterly. In practice, some Groups monitor more frequently. Most of the Function Group meeting minutes reviewed were basically progress reports, containing lists of "successes" and "slowdowns."

Delegation of planning and monitoring authority places decisions about work priorities in the Function Groups, which explicitly gives the Groups the authority to establish and change priorities. This authority derives from the fact that Function Groups can add, drop, and defer tasks. These decisions about what tasks get done and when are effective decisions about priorities. In more traditional organizations, this authority generally rests with senior management.

2.2.2 Resource Allocation

Within the parameters of the annual plans, the Function Groups decide what gets done, how and when it gets done, and who does it. This makes them the locus of resource allocation decisions. This is true even though seven of the eight Groups do not estimate the amount of personnel time or the cost associated with each activity. For example, the Field Activities Group does not explicitly estimate the level of effort by task. Members of this Group report that, as a result of years of experience in the business, they have an intuitive understanding of how much effort each task requires and that analysis of resources versus performance requirements and commitments is unnecessary. The Training Function Group does assign level of effort to specific activities. Resource allocation is an issue at the individual task level, but it is also an issue at the overall project level. Resource issues at this higher level include the relative level of effort devoted to planning versus service delivery, training versus technical assistance, self-use tool development versus direct project staff services, and the like. Aside from the resource allocation implied by the position titles, delegation of resource allocation to the Function Groups effectively prevents project management from making these more general decisions. Function Groups may bring resource allocation conflicts to the PMT for resolution. In the absence of any perceived conflict, they make these decisions themselves through deciding what work they will do and how they will allocate resources to it. Further, the Function Groups apparently do not generate sufficient data for project

management to answer these kinds of questions. As with planning and monitoring, resource allocation authority generally rests with senior management in more traditional organizations.

2.2.3 Technical Oversight and Quality Control

The role of the Function Groups in technical oversight and quality control is unclear. The Function Group meeting minutes reviewed shed no light on this question. While some clearly reflect a discussion leading to a technical decision (e.g., the content of the Logistics Management Information System [LMIS] Guide), none show any evidence of discussion or conclusions related to technical review or technical quality.

Indeed, the locus of these functions within the project is unclear. Some staff members report that quality control and technical approval of products and activities rest with the Function Groups. Others maintain that these functions reside in the PMT or with the deputy director for field activities. Still others state that these activities are located in the project's peer review program, with each advisor returning from a trip presenting his or her trip report and receiving feedback about the content of the report and its recommendations. Peer review may take place within a Function Group or a subset thereof. Wherever available, the deputy director for field activities attends these debriefings. The only position description that contains any reference to "technical oversight" is that of the senior logistics coordinator, and the oversight refers only to buy-ins and project field offices. The position descriptions of the director and deputy director for field activities refer to technical "guidance" or "support," which is much less explicit than oversight. Also, the deputy reviews and approves work plans and strategies and reviews trip reports and other project products before they are released. Given the project's diversity and the number of simultaneous activities and products, it is unlikely that these reviews constitute rigorous technical oversight or quality control. Thus, it appears that the project's decentralized style significantly diffuses technical oversight and quality control responsibilities.

2.2.4 Field Management

JSI/FPLM has undertaken impressive initiatives to strengthen its management of constantly expanding field activities. This has involved creating the new senior logistics coordinator positions (with consequences for level of effort expenditures), improving project backstopping, and refining administrative systems and procedures. Because the project believes that decisions affecting the field are best made by those closest to and most knowledgeable about the field, considerable authority is delegated to field personnel.

Nevertheless, management recognizes the need for effective oversight, and the home office is organized to provide maximum support to the field. With the exception of those who now report to the senior logistics coordinator/Asia, all field staff members officially report to the deputy director for field activities. In practice, this is a chain of reporting, not a chain of command or supervision. The regional logistics advisor for Latin America, for example, submits regular reports to the deputy but does not report direct supervision by the deputy. She does contact various other staff members at various times, depending on the nature of the task or activity, or the functional area in which it falls. The team did not interview other field staff members now officially reporting to the deputy.

However, despite management's attention to strengthening field management, there remains some question about what really happens in practice and about the amount and locus of supervision and oversight really provided to the field.

2.2.5 Personnel Management

The project's structure affects personnel management in three ways. First, the Function Groups play a key role in hiring. While the PMT retains responsibility for determining that the project can fill a position and for negotiating salary with the successful candidate, it is the Function Group or a work team it designates that defines the job, establishes the basic qualifications, and arranges through the administrator for appropriate advertising. The Function Group designates a hiring committee, including at least one PMT member, that interviews and selects from the candidates. This system allows those who will be working with the new hire to explain the job, get a good feel for the candidates, and invest in the decision. This maximizes the likelihood that the candidate will fit well with the organization and work productively within it. At the same time, it may also promote too much homogeneity and limit diversity of skills, experience, and approaches among new staff members.

Second, personnel evaluation is a group process, though not necessarily based in the Function Groups. Each staff member is evaluated by a team, which includes the individual to which he or she formally reports as well as others with whom the staff member works. Each staff member may request that certain individuals participate in the evaluation. In addition, staff members can independently volunteer to participate in the evaluation of others. Given that many staff members report to more than one person because they hold several positions, this system permits the broad-based input needed in the assessment of each staff member's performance. It is also appropriate to the project's inter-unit, interdisciplinary approach to specific tasks.

Third, the project is somewhat less rigorous than more traditional organizations in its reliance on position descriptions. It appears that early on the project used the position descriptions submitted in the proposal, which consist of bullets indicating the principal tasks of each position. As the project progressed and grew and its leadership became aware of the need for more explicit management controls, detailed position descriptions were developed for many of the key positions, including project director, deputy director for field activities, senior logistics coordinator, project administrator, and financial officer. These descriptions also include experience and education prerequisites. There are currently six positions for which no descriptions exist. These include the QA specialist and MIS specialist (both of which are filled by individuals who also serve as logistics advisors), the CPT database manager, the senior training coordinator (a relatively new position at the time of the evaluation), the assistant Population Projects Database manager, and the programmer. Project staff reports that the absence of position descriptions is not a problem since the individuals in these positions—plus their colleagues and supervisors—have an excellent understanding of their job responsibilities., Such an understanding would probably be less widespread in a more traditional organization with less intensive staff interaction.

2.2.6 Ensuring Sufficient Attention to USAID's Priorities and Concerns

Liaison with USAID rests explicitly with the PMT. In this respect, JSI/FPLM does not differ substantially from most projects administered by USAID contractors. Consequently, the PMT is responsible for ensuring that the project is responsive to USAID's interests and priorities and for communicating these interests and priorities to all project staff members. There is frequent interaction between the PMT and the CTO. Because specific tasks are delegated to other levels within the project, the CTO is also in frequent contact with other staff members on particular issues and activities. In addition, the CTO and other CLM staff are invited to attend various planning, review, and task-oriented meetings along with project staff. Nevertheless, decisions about priorities, resource allocation, and technical approaches to tasks are made by the Function Groups. As the Groups monitor progress, they are also the first-line sensors of problems and issues which are particularly sensitive for CLM and other USAID units. Senior management certainly has sufficient experience and knowledge to recognize these problems and issues, compare Group decisions with USAID's priorities, and alert CLM to developments in which it has a special interest. However, Groups can and do meet without these members present, and meeting notes cannot be relied on to reveal these kinds of issues. The project structure, therefore, risks diffusing this responsibility to a level that is unable to carry it out.

2.3 Staff Mix and Allocation

The fact that project staff has consistently provided a wide range of assistance services to diverse family planning and AIDS logistics systems is ample evidence of the availability of multiple technical skills. As shown in Figure 2 (based on staff resumes provided by JSI/FPLM), all of the current senior field-based staff members came to the project with prior family planning field experience, over half with prior family planning logistics experience, and over half with prior experience in other health commodities. In addition, most of the senior field staff members have worked with other international private voluntary, nongovernmental, and/or donor organizations. This level of expertise brings both technical strengths and professional credibility to overseas operations and is a major factor in the strength of these operations.

Figure 3 (based on staff resumes provided by JSI/FPLM) provides similar data for the 14 current home office staff members involved in providing field services and presents a somewhat different picture. Like the senior field personnel, those in the three most senior positions bring a great deal of relevant prior experience to the project. Also, the staff as a whole reflects significant experience with other international private voluntary, nongovernmental, and donor organizations. However, of all field service staff members, only five came to the project with prior family planning field experience, five with prior family planning logistics experience, and three with prior experience in other health commodities. Of the six logistics advisors, three came to FPLM with experience in family planning, family planning logistics, or other health commodities logistics. None of the five training advisors had experience in any of these areas. This suggests that the project engages in considerable staff development, both formal and informal. This is confirmed by the fact that eight of the staff members listed have been with JSI at least five years and have received promotions.

Figure 2

SENIOR FIELD STAFF									
Title	Yrs. JSI	Yrs. FPLM	Prior FP field exp.	Prior FP logistics exp.	Prior other health comm. logistics exp.	Prior Peace Corps	Prior other int'l PVO, NGO, donor	Prior commercial logistics exp.	Promotion within JSI
RLA-LAC	6.5	6.5	x				x		x
RLA-East AF	8	8	x		x	x	x		x
RLA-West AF (ISTI)	N/A	2	x	x		x	x		
COP-Dhaka	1	1	x	x	x	x			
COP-Manila	3.5	3.5	x	x	x	x	x		
COP-Nairobi	3	3	x	x	x		x		
LA-Mali	<1	<1	x				x		

Figure 3

HOME OFFICE STAFF PROVIDING TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND TRAINING SERVICES									
Title	Yrs. JSI	Yrs. FPLM	Prior FP field exp.	Prior FP logistics exp.	Prior other health comm. logistics exp.	Prior Peace Corps	Prior other int'l PVO, NGO, donor	Prior commercial logistics exp.	Promotion within JSI
Proj. Dir.	23	8	x	x	x				x
Dep. Dir.-Field	10	4	x				x		x
SLC - Asia	6	6	x	x			x		x
Log. Adv.	<1	<1					x		
Log. Adv. PATH	N/A	1			x	x	x		
Log. Adv./Demog.	6	6	x	x			x		x
Log. Adv.	6	6	x	x					
AIDS/QA/Log. Adv.	3.5	3.5		x	x	x	x		
MIS/Log. Adv.	9	6				x			x
Sr. Trg. Coord.	5	5				x			x
Trg. Adv.	7	5.5							x
Trg. Adv.	10	8				x			x
Trg. Adv.	<1	<1				x			
Trg. Adv.	1	1					x		

Commercial logistics experience is completely absent from all field service staff members, both at the home office and among the expatriates in the field. Of 52 local hires, only three have such experience, and they are in no position to have a major influence on the project as a whole. Project management reports very limited use of consultants. Therefore, few assignments could have benefited from this kind of expertise. This issue is discussed further in Chapter 3.

With regard to the relationship between staff allocation and the priority countries, the project provided data showing that, from 1990 to 1993, there were over 3,600 in-country days worked, with almost 82 percent in priority countries. The latter percentage is expected to be even higher in 1994. Some of this in-country time is devoted to management and administration rather than technical assistance in the buy-in countries, but the data available provide no estimate of the magnitude of the administration component. Data provided by the FPLM/Dhaka office show that, from mid-1992 to mid-1994, slightly less than 25 percent of the external staff and consultant time was devoted to administration and management.

The team was unable to assess the relationship between staff allocation and the priority of activities. In terms of field services, this would require the evaluation team to make an independent judgment about each country's priority needs and the appropriateness of services provided within that context. Clearly, such an effort was not possible given time and personnel constraints. In a more global sense, there are indications that a number of centrally-based activities, such as developing the Forecasting Cookbook and the training evaluation guidelines, have been delayed in favor of field service delivery. This implies that the staff, with CLM's approval, places a higher priority on field services than on central tool development. There are also some questions on CLM's part about the nature of and level of effort devoted to selected tasks, and several Missions question the amount of time devoted to planning. However, given the absence of any data relating level of effort to types of activities, the team cannot make any judgments on these questions.

2.4 Discussion

As indicated above, FPLM's overall management structure is standard, while its management practice and style, as reflected in the Function Group and work team concepts, are not. The principal question before the evaluation team is the effect of management practices on the performance of work, not the merits of those practices on their own. The key issues are accountability (internally and to the project's many clients), effectiveness of supervision and monitoring, quality of work, and relationship between costs and benefits. To a large extent, many of the unique features of the JSI/FPLM management approach have the potential to be both assets and liabilities. It is incumbent on senior management to maximize the asset potential.

The project's *modus operandi* is enormously beneficial to project staff. All staff members interviewed are highly enthusiastic about the opportunities to work in interdisciplinary groups, share in the development of products, take part in a wider range of activities than they might in a more unit-oriented structure, and benefit from the on-the-job learning experience which this system provides. Many staff members come to the project with no experience in family planning or logistics. The fact that these staff members are productive members of the field teams attests to the quality of the training provided. The Function Groups undoubtedly serve as part of the training

program. The staff also enjoys participating on an equal basis with those both more and less experienced and believe strongly that all staff members can contribute valuable ideas, regardless of rank or title. Morale appears unusually high, and project tasks and activities must certainly benefit from the staff members' interest in and commitment to their jobs.

There are benefits for management staff as well. By delegating some management responsibilities to lower levels, management staff members—particularly the project director and deputy director for field activities—have an opportunity to devote their considerable talents to technical tasks. This enriches their jobs and provides a work day much more interesting than one devoted purely to administration. In addition, it allows the application of senior technical skills to field activities, thus enhancing the quality of project work. In some cases, field clients specifically request the technical services of these individuals, and the project is able to respond favorably to these requests. Further, the JSI/FPLM management structure has allowed for considerable expansion throughout the project with no comparable expansion among management staff.

The structure also offers benefits to the project's clients. The Function Groups can promote consistency within each of the technical areas, ensuring that tasks in a new country, for example, reflect relevant past experience in other countries. While staff members are committed to providing services specific to the needs and environment of each country, they are nevertheless aware of the need for the project also to speak with one voice throughout the USAID community, and Function Groups are one way to ensure that this is done. Also, the cross-disciplinary approach means that problems and challenges are subjected to a variety of viewpoints and technical analysis, with the potential to result in far more systemic solutions than would a narrower approach. Further, delegation **may** be cost effective and resource efficient, maximizing the time and skill available for direct services to project clients.

Despite all of these benefits, the structure reveals some weaknesses and raises some questions that need to be answered. For example, there is no clear locus of responsibility in certain areas, such as technical review and approval. Even within the project itself, there is no consensus on this point. Given this lack of clarity, it is possible that quality control receives less attention than it deserves or is inconsistent. Senior management does not appear to be sufficiently concerned about this issue.

The extent to which USAID's concerns, interests, and priorities govern project activities is another issue. While there is no dispute that the majority of resources are appropriately allocated to priority countries, CLM representatives believe that the project sometimes independently pursues activities and tasks that are of low priority or, in fact, contrary to the client's interests. This has occurred in the quality assurance area. Given that Function Groups are authorized to create, modify, add, and delete tasks, it is possible that USAID's viewpoint gets lost at levels below the PMT, where responsibility for CLM liaison resides. As a result, this viewpoint fails to inform these decisions. The fact that a member of the PMT serves on every Function Group is insufficient to prevent this from happening. The Group can meet in part, without the PMT member. Further, there is no guarantee that the consensus-building process in which all participants have equal standing gives any more weight to CLM's views than to other factors that must be considered. Thus, there is considerable potential for a loss of focus as responsibility is delegated downwards.

Collaboration with outside agencies on technical matters is another potential problem. As indicated in Chapter 3, the project engages successfully in extensive outreach to other donors and contracting agencies. These activities have successfully enhanced appreciation for the importance of logistics and helped coordinate efforts at all levels. When it comes to close technical cooperation, however, the project's structure makes it difficult for many who operate in different management environments and have limited time to work comfortably and productively with JSI/FPLM. Some CDC staff members, for example, express considerable frustration about long meetings with endless debates. They also question whether some of the staff members involved are truly qualified to participate as equals in some of the discussions. They find the staff training aspect of the Function Groups somewhat burdensome and believe that much of their own time is unnecessarily wasted. If, as recommended in Chapter 4, FPLM III includes staff persons who previously worked in commercial environments, these persons may prefer a different working strategy. If JSI continues as contractor, the project may have to become more flexible, allowing a variety of work styles in the project.

The reliance on self-management and self-selection for Function Groups and work teams also raises questions. Given the enthusiasm within the home office, it is more likely that staff would over-commit than under-commit. Nevertheless, the evaluation team found no evidence that project management monitors workloads and/or appropriateness of work assignments, even though it could easily use the ENFORCER to provide partial answers. For example, management appears unaware that a third of the staff falls outside the general rule of thumb regarding Function Group membership. This is important only if it is an indication that management lacks adequate knowledge of individual staff activities and contribution levels. Similarly, management is confident that all staff members understand their own obligations and those of others, with or without written position descriptions. This may or may not be true. Further, interviews indicate that some individuals bear a greater workload than others. Management states that it does not track this overtly, relying on peer pressure as well as individual conscience to preserve an appropriate balance. The absence of specific Function Group objectives hinders monitoring at the Group level as well. This relatively hands-off approach may stimulate productivity. It also may limit it.

Finally, there is the cost factor. Project staff readily admits that the process of Group analysis and decision making is time consuming but maintain that, once decisions are made, the structure permits rapid implementation. However, it is unclear exactly how much all this time costs and whether or not a less diffuse system would be cheaper and generate a comparable or better result. The project justifies the extensive involvement of junior staff in numerous Function Groups on the basis that these staff members need a full grasp of what is going on in order to backstop effectively. They could accomplish this simply by reading Function Group minutes without participating in the dialogue that precedes decisions.

There is no way now to determine how much the staff development aspects cost. There is also no way to compare current costs to the costs of elevating selected activities to a higher level requiring fewer people. Further, there is no way to determine if more streamlined decision making by fewer people would result in lower in-house costs and more services of equal quality to the field. Only three of the reporting USAID Missions expressed dissatisfaction based on the slow pace of planning, and in these three cases it is not clear that the planning process itself, rather than limited resources and competing priorities, delayed implementation. Nevertheless, it is possible that

decision making, planning, and the peer review for quality control may be relatively expensive, without a substantial gain in ultimate benefits to the client.

The evaluation team cannot make this determination. There is no basis for comparison. CDC does engage in similar work, but as a government agency it is not truly comparable to a private contractor and does not provide a reasonable benchmark against which to measure JSI/FPLM.[3] Further, there are no data available to estimate the costs associated with the unique aspects of this project's management. Senior JSI/FPLM staff members are persuaded that this model has been working well. To the extent that the project is generally highly regarded and complaints have been limited, the model has, in fact, been working well. However, no attempts have been made to investigate other options that might work as well or better, and at lower cost. The evaluation team is not persuaded that the benefits so outweigh cost and risk considerations that assessment of alternatives is unnecessary. These alternatives are not limited to strictly authoritarian, closed systems that constitute the other end of the spectrum. There are many points on the continuum in between. There are ways to formalize and localize technical oversight, quality control, and accountability without stifling creativity.

The reality is that USAID's resources are limited and growing more so, and both demand and need for logistics assistance are increasing. It is time to get a better handle on the costs of the current management approach to see if increases are possible in both efficiency and effectiveness without losing the substantial benefits that this approach offers. Project management has already indicated its willingness to enhance management and respond to growing management challenges. Such an inquiry would be another step in the same direction.

2.5 Recommendation

The following recommendation describes the nature and purpose of the inquiry and suggests collaboration between CLM and JSI/FPLM in the process.

1. Recommendation: **Within three months, project management should develop a system to assess management practices in ensuring that the project is maximally responsive to CLM's priorities and assess (1) the efficiency of current management practices and (2) the effectiveness of current subject to adequate technical oversight. Quarterly thereafter, project management should share these findings with CLM. If the assessment reveals that modifications would result in greater**

[3] A private organization has infinitely more flexibility in hiring, firing, creating, and changing position descriptions, staff supervision and evaluation, and other personnel decisions. It has many more degrees of freedom in selecting (and changing) management philosophy and style, refining chains of command, assigning work, allocating staff and other resources, and a host of other areas. Also, the profit incentive and the implications on overhead recovery of various management decisions are unique to private for-profit groups.

efficiency and effectiveness, project management should institute approaches that meet these objectives, are minimally disruptive to current operations, and, at the same time, preserve existing benefits.

3. PROJECT PERFORMANCE AND RESULTS

The JSI/FPLM Project operates successfully in a highly unstable environment, subject to changing USAID interests and priorities as well as shifting landscapes in the many countries in which it works. It also meets the challenge of serving multiple clients, including CLM, USAID Bureaus, and many Missions. Project clients are largely satisfied with the services they receive. This is due in large part to the project's willing flexibility and its strong service orientation, as well as its commitment to quality. Competing demands from various clients result in competing demands on limited resources, and project staff is conscious of the need to balance these demands carefully. The project has certainly been a major contributor to advances in CLM's central procurement capability through the installation and operation of NEWVERN. It has also helped elevate the status of logistics within the family planning arena, with more and more leaders in family planning policy and programming aware of the critical importance of the logistics component. In addition, the project has helped many countries contribute to advances in CLM's central procurement capability through the meet key logistics system needs and solve system problems. Further, it has been attentive to its deliverables requirements and projects that virtually all of them will be met or exceeded.

Given the increasing visibility of the logistics component, demands and needs for assistance services are likely to grow. At the same time, funding and other resources within USAID and other donors are becoming increasingly constrained. The global imperative now is to do more with less money, and it is unlikely that this project will be an exception. USAID has already made a tremendous investment in this project, yet overall there has been little permanent movement in the target systems. There are a multitude of factors well beyond this project that affect progress on the ground. For example, target governments lack sufficient funding, personnel, and equipment to implement and sustain advances. Political developments influence continuity of external assistance as well as internal administrative initiatives. Donors with different agendas may provide support in some cases so diverse that the recipient country has difficulty in using and integrating assistance services. Also, the project design contains no performance indicators. Thus, it is impossible to attribute the pace of advancement on the ground—slow or fast—to this project alone, and this evaluation does not attempt to do so. In addition, the long incumbency enjoyed by JSI/FPLM prevents any solid comparison with other implementation approaches. As a result, even if performance indicators existed, there is no basis on which to assess the merits of this project's approach versus those of others.

The remainder of this section addresses project performance and results in key implementation areas and concludes with five recommendations for improvement. These recommendations apply both to the remainder of FPLM II and to FPLM III. The range of activities described is illustrative rather than exhaustive.

3.1 Strategies and Plans

In late 1990 or early 1991, the project developed what it terms a strategic plan. The plan has apparently not been updated with major changes in the priority countries or the inclusion of buy-ins. This document was approved by CLM. It presents the project objectives and rationale, seven major

activities (such as training and technical assistance), resources, and structure. It also defines five "strategies" for technical activities: (1) design, evaluation, and institutionalization of sound logistics management systems; (2) estimation of future contraceptive requirements; (3) technical support in management of the Office of Population's contraceptive procurement; (4) special studies; and (5) donor collaboration. There is very little distinction between the "strategies" and the activities. Further, the "strategic approach" subsections of the project's strategic plan are basically sets of operational tasks. The contract refers to goals, objectives, and activities but does not present a strategy or request one from the contractor. Thus, neither CLM nor JSI/FPLM has established any strategic or conceptual framework for this project. As a result, it is only good faith that links the so-called strategies and activities to the project's overall objectives.

The project develops yearly work plans, ultimately approved by CLM, with semiannual revisions for each country, technical area, or activity as needed. Twice a year, in January and in June, JSI/FPLM staff has a two-week no travel period. The annual work plans developed in January are reviewed in June. The no travel periods also involve formal progress reviews and the development of progress reports. CLM and CDC/FPLM staffs participate in these activities as available. The work plans, showing target completion dates and persons responsible, constitute the project's principal planning tool and are the benchmarks for monitoring progress and outputs. Major outputs, such as materials, country visits, and training, are shown as benchmarks. The plans do not, however, contain any budget or level of effort data and therefore cannot be used directly to monitor expenditure of personnel or other resources. The format of the work plans has evolved over the life of the project to promote overall utility and ease of use. The 1993 work plan introduced country summaries, which combine progress reports with tasks slated for the plan year. It also introduced priority ranking of tasks. In addition, the project now produces "mini" work plans for selected central office technical tasks.

The project also develops country work plans subject to CLM approval. The format, comprehensiveness, and developmental process vary according to country priority and level of effort. In the case of buy-ins and in other countries with significant project assistance packages, project staff develops detailed work plans in collaboration with local personnel, including representatives of the government, the Mission, CDC/FPLM where appropriate, and other Cooperating Agencies. These plans are submitted to the home office for review and approval, which apparently involves a combination of activities by Function Groups, the country monitor, the senior logistics coordinator (for countries now covered by this position), and the deputy director for field activities.

This is the case in Bangladesh, for example, where the project generated both a four-year plan dated 1994 and a more detailed annual work plan for 1994. Neither document contains an overall strategy, though selected strategic elements are addressed individually. Both documents are based on a series of eight outputs developed jointly with the government and the Mission. Although the word "strategy" appears in the four-year plan, the wording following it relates to tasks and activities. While some of the outputs imply establishing local capacity (e.g., "Establish an efficient system for procurement planning and scheduling within the Directorate of Family Planning"), there is nothing in either document that ties the outputs together and paints a picture of exactly how institutionalized the system will be at the end of the four-year period. The estimated institutionalization status of selected elements is not encouraging, especially in light of the project's long presence in-country. Further, there is no indication of any serious intention to reduce or phase

out expatriate assistance during the period, though there is recognition of the desirability of doing so.

The planning for countries slated for minimal assistance is based mainly in trip reports, where the staff member who made the visit recommends any future activities needed. These reports are subject to peer review. In the case of countries that are neither intensive nor *ad hoc*, plans of varying complexity are developed, usually in-country and in collaboration with others, and reviewed and approved centrally by JSI/FPLM.

In some cases, plans are based on country assessments, but there is apparently no standard assessment process. The project did plan to develop country assessment protocols and guidelines in 1991, but this initiative was reportedly dropped because of USAID's "Big Country Strategy." Nevertheless, there have been detailed assessments, such as the logistics training needs assessment in Mexico, the training needs assessment for supply officers and storekeepers in Bangladesh, and a preliminary assessment of family health sector logistics in Ethiopia.

Discussion. The absence of an overall project strategy or framework is a shared responsibility of JSI/FPLM and CLM. Despite some contract language that stresses institutionalization, sustainability, and measurable, specific logistics system gains within target countries, neither party has any hook on which to hang the project's multitudinous activities to see if they measure up. As a result, it is very difficult to assess whether or not any given activity is the best use of funds, will have a temporary or lasting effect on a country's logistics system, is the most appropriate intervention in terms of overall goals, or can be sustained without continued project assistance. Activities can be assessed in terms of quality and client satisfaction, but these dimensions are quite different and are not necessarily appropriate indicators for the broad goals. In addition, the absence of a hook makes plans and activities appear fragmented and raises the potential for duplication of effort. There is no logical, structured way to comprehensively determine if the project's significant training and technical assistance inputs form a cohesive whole and represent a major advance, or even if activities within a given country have long-term potential and represent the best intervention mix.

Since the strategic perspective is lacking at the project-wide level, it is also generally lacking at the country level. As a result, in Bangladesh, where the Mission has made a considerable investment and clearly expected a focus on institutionalization, the project has only recently begun to address this issue and still does not have a comprehensive strategy statement. The fact that the country's family planning system is heavily donor-dependent and likely to remain so for some time does not erase the project's obligation to transfer skills and responsibility more quickly. It also points to the need for more efficient and effective use of project funds. Again, this is a shared responsibility, as the Mission has continued to sign off on and approve project plans.

First, it is up to CLM to decide if it wants and needs a true strategy within this service-oriented project. Strategy and service orientation are not necessarily mutually exclusive. For example, CLM—either independently or in consultation with JSI/FPLM—could establish a strategy that inherently facilitates screening of and decisions on field requests. Those requests that would result in in-country activities clearly related to the overall strategy would be forwarded for project action. Those that represent Mission, local government, or Cooperating Agency interests in assistance inconsistent with the strategy would not. If CLM determines that a strategy is desirable, it is

incumbent on CLM to set the parameters of the strategy at the Agency level, oversee the development by JSI/FPLM of a specific project strategy, and use the strategy jointly with the contractor to allocate resources, assess performance, and adjust the intervention mix as needed.

JSI/FPLM's planning is undoubtedly adversely affected by the absence of a strategy. It also must be viewed within the context of the unstable environment described in the introduction to this section. CLM requires annual work plans, and presumably one plan should have a logical connection to the next one as well as to the one that preceded it. However, this is extremely difficult when there are changes in the priority country list, when political developments add to or subtract from USAID's overall country list, when unanticipated requests arise, and when assumptions about the commitments of a recipient government or Cooperating Agency prove false. All of these factors are beyond the project's control, and some are beyond USAID's.

On the other hand, the instability is not universal. There are many countries on which the project has had a consistent focus, and a significant portion of the environment has been stable enough to permit the project to engage in comprehensive, multiyear planning. These countries are suitable for phased interventions that exhibit a logical relationship to each other. In some cases, successive plans show such a relationship.

The annual work plans involve a tremendous level of effort and are apparently the result of considered weighing of options. The complex country plans are also labor-intensive and require significant decisions. Nevertheless, following CLM's lead, they focus more on process and output than on significant achievements or impact, and the output measures appear easily achievable. The emphasis on outputs makes the plans somewhat useful in monitoring progress as the project defines it. For example, one high-priority task in the 1994 work plan involves field testing an LMIS assessment tool, then finalizing and circulating it. It is easy to determine when this has been done. Other high-priority tasks are more generic in nature (such as "make QA assessment visits to selected priority countries") and are less easy to track, since the plan contains no numbers and designates no particular countries. Granted, some tasks are further refined in Function Groups or work teams and can be tracked separately in that way. The plans also facilitate semiannual and annual reports, which are prepared in a parallel format.

The work plans could serve other purposes as well. For example, if they specified allocations of level of effort, they would be useful in person-power resource planning and control and in assessing internal efficiencies. The assumption is that the plans reflect virtual full use of all staff members, yet there is no hard evidence to support this assumption. Though the plan designates individuals responsible for task implementation, there is no indication of how much time each individual will devote. The training group adds the staff allocation component into its own plans, but this does not occur anywhere else within the project. As a result, there is no clear way for plan users to determine exactly how expansion of a given task or addition of a new task will affect implementation of tasks to which the project is already committed. While project staff claims an intuitive understanding of the resource situation, CLM cannot make these assessments accurately and must depend on the project to do so. This has been somewhat problematic, as CLM has been impatient about the slow development of major project tools, such as the Forecasting Cookbook, and must accept project assertions that no time has been available to complete it. An analysis of successive work plans also shows considerable delays in training evaluation guidelines, an LMIS assessment tool, an LMIS Manager's Guide, and other products. With apparent CLM concurrence, however,

the project regularly delays such activities in order to remain responsive to field requests. Without any up-front data on level of effort, CLM has little choice but to concur on a case-by-case basis. The absence of an explicit strategy that determines the relative weights of basic tools and responses to field service requests means that there is no consistent framework for these decisions.

The inclusion of explicit level of effort projections in the plans would also facilitate monitoring by JSI/FPLM and its clients. For example, based on information provided by JSI/FPLM in Dhaka, the Bangladesh buy-in consumed approximately 41 weeks of home office short-term training assistance from the middle of 1992 through the middle of 1994. This is the equivalent of 40 percent of a full-time equivalent (FTE) annually. For much of the same period, the buy-in also supported a full-time resident training advisor (who also periodically served as acting chief of party) and a subcontract with a local firm employing trainers previously on the staff. The trainers are apparently now qualified in training delivery, but not in design, development, or evaluation. Despite the fact that large numbers of people have been trained, this is a massive level of assistance effort when compared to the minimal level of institutionalization that has been achieved. Also, the program is just now being comprehensively evaluated, following more limited evaluation activities in the latter half of 1993. Both Mission and CLM staffs expressed surprise at these figures during presentations by the evaluation team. Comparison of estimated versus actual level of effort might have focused attention on this issue earlier and allowed JSI/FPLM and CLM to assess the appropriateness of these expenditures in the context of the buy-in's objectives and priorities.

The inclusion of a cost element could enrich the work plans. Although JSI/FPLM II is not expected to exceed its cost ceiling, it is difficult to determine how much certain types of activities cost. In the case of buy-in-supported activities, cost calculation may be somewhat easier, but this project is expected to have a continuing significant central component, and the evaluation team is not aware of any cost data, or even cost range data, that could be used to price activities and help CLM and others decide how to spend money. CLM is now debating the magnitude of resources to allocate to FPLM III, and, except in the gross aggregate, this project has apparently provided no hard data to facilitate that decision.

The work plans might also benefit from more indicators, even if they focus only on process, such as number of weeks of technical assistance provided (by functional area or country), courses delivered, timely reports submitted, and the like. It may be possible to infer these from individual country or group plans, but their presence in the annual plan would enhance management's capacity to monitor along these dimensions. Ideally, the plan could also incorporate more impact-oriented measures, such as those related to stock supplies or post-training job performance, but these are probably more feasible, if at all, in specific country plans.

Individual intensive country plans, if they reflect an overall strategy, might benefit from increased attention to the resources and activities required on the part of the government, Mission, or other Cooperating Agencies, as appropriate. Since the project does not operate anywhere in a vacuum, a detailed plan showing how the inputs and activities of each player relate would clarify many of the factors on which progress depends. For example, one of the activities in the Bangladesh four-year plan is to "develop and implement a long-range plan for establishing contraceptive forecasting capability within GOB by year 4." Clearly, it is not the plan itself which is the major objective, but the actual institutionalization of forecasting capacity. Achievement of this objective requires efforts on

the part of the GOB as well as the project. While the project could not be held responsible for the plan elements beyond its control, inclusion of these elements would show more clearly how the project is collaborating with others and might help motivate others to bear their share. Since the plans are generally developed collaboratively, there is no reason why they should not reflect activities that are collaborative.

There is also a question as to whether or not more standardized assessments would contribute to better planning. In theory, they undoubtedly would. However, the project's portfolio ranges from one-visit countries, in which it is primarily engaged in preparing CPTs, to countries where it has an on-site presence and a continuing involvement in a multifaceted intervention, with numerous countries at various points in between. Clearly, it would not be a good use of resources to conduct full assessments in every country, and it would be difficult to draw the line separating those countries that should have one from those that should not. Moreover, some countries, for political or other reasons, could move at any time from one side of the line to the other. Nevertheless, it is not clear from reviewing trip reports and other documents that, when assessments do take place, they follow a specific protocol and/or generate comparable data. In high-effort countries where long-term assistance is contemplated, more standardization might help resolve competing priorities for funds.

Many of the assessments that have been done appear to be quite methodical, though in different ways. They also result in clear, specific recommendations. However, they could benefit from an added component that articulates an overall strategy into which the recommendations fit, showing their relationship clearly, indicating priority, and showing what would happen in the event a given recommendation is not adopted.

The recent Ethiopia assessment by JSI/FPLM and CDC/FPLM is a good example of where this component could have been useful. This was an assessment of the logistics requirements for AIDS prevention and family planning. A follow-up system assessment is apparently planned for the summer of 1994. The assessment report contains a detailed description of the existing system, its players, and key system elements. In addition, it makes detailed recommendations for various units and activities within the system. Further, it lists seven priority activities which should be undertaken immediately as a "bridge" to a proposed family health project. It does not, however, provide an explicit description of how all recommendations relate to each other, how they constitute an intervention and improvement strategy, and which ones have priority. This would provide a context for making resource allocation decisions (by FPLM, the Mission, other donors, and the government) in the event not all recommendations could be adopted. It would also show clearly the consequences on the total system of failing to act on a given recommendation. This may prove an excellent way to motivate both donors and government units to make and honor commitments. Finally, it would provide a tool for sequencing inputs and monitoring progress toward the goals embedded in the strategy. It is true that the terms of reference for this particular assignment did not require a strategic analysis. However, this does not bar JSI/FPLM and CDC/FPLM from proactively doing so to assist the Mission and the government in their own planning and decision-making processes.

3.2 Contraceptive Procurement Table Preparation

Contraceptive procurement tables (CPTs) have been in use for many years as a method for Missions to project use of contraceptives and request accurate quantities of contraceptive supplies from USAID/Washington. They are used not only for developing short-term shipping schedules, but also for estimating total quantities for contracts with delivery dates several years into the future. CPTs are developed using several pieces of data: (1) quantities on hand in the in-country logistics system; (2) actual usage for two years and projected usage for the next three years; (3) USAID shipments already scheduled for receipt in-country; (4) supplies to be received from other donors; and (5) pipeline requirements, stated in months of supply, to maintain an appropriate in-country supply. Using these data, the NEWCPT software, described below, calculates requirements to meet demand and maintain adequate supplies. This leads to a decision about what supplies are required from USAID and the establishment of an optimal shipping schedule.

CPTs are prepared for approximately 35 countries. All are processed by JSI/FPLM. About one-half are prepared by JSI/FPLM staff, in some cases in collaboration with Mission and other in-country personnel. CPT preparation is often the purpose of the staff visit. Sometimes it occurs as part of a technical assistance visit. About one-third are prepared by CDC consultants. In a few countries, CPTs are prepared independently.

When JSI/FPLM receives completed CPTs at the central office, it runs a compare/contrast program to check the NEWVERN data. New data often show that shipments that were not previously confirmed were in fact received. These confirmations are updated in NEWVERN, and a cable is sent to the Mission. In addition, the central office runs CPTESTs on the data. These are programs that compare data from the CPTs with usage estimated from existing demographic data. While these tests are crude at best, they provide one method of confirming the magnitude of the estimates. When serious discrepancies are found, consultations are held with the advisor involved in CPT preparation to resolve questions.

The next step for JSI/FPLM-prepared CPTs is generally a peer review session in which the advisor presents the findings to other staff members, describes data sources and assumptions, and essentially defends the projections. Participating staff members comment on the rationale and offer suggestions for changes. Staff members interviewed note that these meetings can yield strong differences of opinion but view the exchange as an important factor in continually improving CPT quality. CPTs prepared by CDC and Missions are not subject to peer review. Problems identified in these CPTs are communicated directly to CLM for resolution.

In addition to reviewing individual country CPTs, JSI/FPLM carries out several aggregate analyses of CPT reliability. For example, it performs an annual accuracy analysis to compare year-to-year forecasts. It also studies the relationship between CPT quantities and quantities a program actually receives.

The development of NEWCPT software began under FPLM I and continued under FPLM II, resulting in a quite sophisticated and complex product. Starting as a program designed to produce a one-page CPT, the software now does the following:

- Accesses data on shipments from the NEWVERN software.
- Aids in scheduling appropriate shipments.
- Produces requirement tables for non-USAID supplies, if needed.
- Produces financial requirements.
- Produces a draft cable requesting supplies from USAID/Washington.

NEWCPT is written in a powerful but little used software called PROGRESS. Since the number of program users is relatively small and the program would never be modified in the field, use of this software is not a problem. The program is menu-driven and, following a series of revisions, is now fairly easy for JSI and CDC FPLM staffs to use. When the advisor visits the field, he or she takes a package called a "lunchbox." The lunchbox contains printed data on the country as well as a diskette with the software, including a file which contains the most current NEWVERN shipment data for the country. This allows the advisor to prepare necessary documentation in-country and turn in the diskette upon returning to the central office. Both JSI and CDC project staffs use these materials, as do countries that prepare CPTs independently.

Forecasting of future consumption is an important part of CPT preparation. JSI/FPLM advocates using information from three sources: (1) existing logistics data; (2) demographic data, such as recent contraceptive prevalence surveys; and (3) service statistics. Projections usually involve collecting data from these sources, explaining differences, and developing a final composite series of forecasts. Sometimes, projections are made based on the logistics system or service capacity alone. This is especially true in forecasting for new programs, new commodities, or condoms for HIV/AIDS prevention programs.

JSI/FPLM has developed a simple demographic data-based software called COCOPLAN that makes forecasting easier. Also, in conjunction with CDC/FPLM, it has been working on a Forecasting Cookbook, now scheduled for draft availability in June 1994. This product has experienced considerable delays as resources have been diverted to meet requests for assistance services in the field.

Discussion. There is general consensus that the CPT process has improved considerably, with estimates growing more reasonable, fewer country-wide stock-outs, and fewer commodities needing to be destroyed because of CPT-based overestimates. These benefits accrue to USAID, other donors, country programs, and users.

Nevertheless, there are a number of concerns in this area. The most significant is a perception that project staff members continue to complete CPTs instead of institutionalizing this process in-country. There are several reasons why this is not occurring as rapidly as some believe it should. First, while the CPT itself is a relatively simple form that could be completed manually, CPT preparation should be part of a planning process that reviews program policy and strategy, program development, and planning for changes in method mix. It should also include a review and validation of existing data. Participation by an advisor could and often does stimulate the

involvement of Mission and local program staff in this kind of broad-based exercise that can have a significant impact on program plans and logistics system design assessment. However, the fact remains that in many instances project staff members simply do the CPTs, with limited involvement of local personnel and without engaging in this broader process. One reporting Mission stated that the CPT was prepared entirely by JSI/FPLM, although Mission and host country counterparts were offered an opportunity comment on it.

Second, recipient programs often tend to overestimate needs. USAID-donated contraceptives are free to these programs, so there is little incentive to constrain requests. Therefore, the CPT visits have an audit function as well. An outsider with expertise in reviewing data from different sources lessens the potential for large overestimates resulting in the ultimate destruction of donated goods. The growing number of HIV/AIDS prevention programs contributes to potential problems with overestimates. Condoms for these programs have a significant impact on existing family planning logistics systems, and estimates have often been done by other agencies based on population data and assumptions that ignore the capacity of both logistics and service delivery systems. JSI/FPLM expresses a valid interest in greater control over or involvement in these projections.

Third, in large countries receiving a significant proportion of USAID commodities, CLM has a particular interest in ensuring the validity of out-year projections so that it can establish order quantities and estimate budgets for USAID procurement contracts. This reinforces the audit function of CPT preparation activities.

Fourth, reliance on the CPT software may foster dependency on project staff to complete the estimations.

Finally, the CPT preparation process occurs only once a year, and there is considerable potential for the loss of institutional capacity from one year to the next. This is particularly true in organizations with frequent staff turnover.

Despite these legitimate reasons for the project to retain control over the CPT process, there remains as yet unrealized potential for turning over the responsibility for CPT preparation in those countries that are ready for it. These would be countries with relatively well-developed logistics management capabilities, are in the processing of graduating from USAID commodity assistance, and request relatively small quantities of contraceptives from USAID. In these countries, more intensive in-country training, probably one-on-one, would be useful. The availability of the Forecasting Cookbook as well as simpler forecasting software (not geared to the USAID-specific CPT alone) would also facilitate the transfer process.

With regard to the software, there has been considerable concern about its flexibility and user-friendliness. The current version has resolved many of the problems faced by JSI and CDC project staffs. However, demand remains for a still simpler version that does not have all the features of NEWCPT but would still be useful. Such a version could be used by anyone interested in making commodity projections, with much less documentation and training required. This would significantly ease transfer of the basic CPT process. Local program or Mission staffs could prepare the CPTs and send completed tables to JSI/FPLM for processing. One disadvantage is that the user would not have the latest NEWVERN data on shipments, but these data could be added centrally and made available to the individual submitting the CPT.

3.3 Technical Assistance in Logistics and Management

The project's technical assistance component is large and diverse. The magnitude of services ranges from one-time, *ad hoc* consultations to intensive, multi-visit efforts and long-term programs supported through buy-ins. The level of assistance is governed in large part by the relative priority of the country as determined collaboratively by JSI/FPLM and CLM. CLM processes service requests from Missions, Bureaus, and Cooperating Agencies and assigns them to JSI/FPLM or CDC/FPLM. Some requests are serviced jointly. In countries receiving ongoing assistance, JSI/FPLM designates one individual as the lead technical assistance provider. When a new country is added and the lead designation is not obviously based on prior work or qualifications, an *ad hoc* committee is formed to make the designation. This committee consists of the country monitor, a content specialist if appropriate, a logistics advisor (if the country monitor is not a logistics advisor), and the deputy director for field activities.

The content of technical assistance runs a wide gamut including the following:

- Assessing the current status of the logistics system and planning for future technical assistance.
- Carrying out system design workshops to obtain consensus on how the system should be developed or changed.
- Forecasting contraceptive needs and developing CPTs and requests to donors for supplies.
- Creating or enhancing the LMIS.
- Improving distribution and transport.
- Supervising and monitoring logistics systems.
- Developing and delivering training (discussed separately in Section 3.4 below).
- Procurement planning.
- Quality assurance.

Countries may receive assistance in one or any combination of these areas. Since the project considers an appropriate, functioning LMIS as key to a functioning logistics system, considerable technical assistance is provided in this area. This may involve establishing a paper system and then moving to computerization. The project has developed country-specific systems, as in Bangladesh, as well as a more generic system called CCMIS (Contraceptive Commodity Management Information System), developed jointly by JSI/FPLM and CDC/FPLM. CDC/FPLM is currently rewriting the CCMIS in dBase, a more common language, to make it more easily adaptable and modifiable by in-country computer experts.

Bangladesh, with its large buy-in, is an example of a country that has received numerous types of technical assistance. The LMIS has been slow to develop, requiring a mid-course change in programming language. Useful report formats are also relatively new. In addition, the LMIS is still run exclusively by JSI/FPLM. Nevertheless, it has had a clear impact on improving management of the logistics system. It prepares a series of reports for various users, including several levels within the public sector family planning program as well as NGOs. These data are used to produce distribution plans and to shift commodities when shortages occur. Several data sources reviewed indicate that the logistics system now operates generally within minimum-maximum guidelines and

stock-outs are becoming increasingly rare. The project has also conducted a storage facility study to help guide expenditure of funds for local storage facility construction. In addition, it studied problems and costs of transportation, resulting in a Request for Proposal (RFP) which has stimulated several proposals to test transport through the private sector or an NGO. Additionally, after subcontracting annual system-wide inventories for several years, JSI/FPLM has instituted a continuous inventory process that will be easier to manage. These technical contributions by the project are important, but the long-standing absence of an institutionalization strategy has left the system heavily dependent on project support. Also, the absence of an overall, comprehensive JSI/FPLM country strategy leaves open the question of whether these activities represent the optimal project investment.

In providing technical assistance, JSI/FPLM draws on traditional logistics management principles adapted for contraceptives and public family planning programs. This model is documented in Logistics Guidelines, developed and updated jointly with CDC/FPLM. The guidelines are intended for use by local program and logistics managers as well as USAID population officers.

As indicated in Chapter 2, supervision and oversight of the technical assistance component is somewhat diffuse, involving the deputy director for field activities, the senior logistics coordinator, and Function Groups. As in the CPT and training arenas, there is peer review of trip reports related to technical assistance and considerable cross-disciplinary attention to technical assistance service challenges.

Discussion. JSI/FPLM has exhibited a remarkable ability to respond to diverse requests and adjust its technical assistance programming to the needs of target countries and to overall USAID policies that affect the technical assistance program. Staff members appear consistently committed to responding to needs and providing services that will make a real difference. As a result, the field is generally highly satisfied with the project's technical assistance services. One population officer stated: "Without JSI/FPLM, family planning logistics in this country would be nowhere!" Other countries, using perhaps less enthusiastic verbiage, provide very positive feedback.

A few are rather dissatisfied. Reasons for dissatisfaction include overly ambitious plans that cannot be implemented locally; JSI/FPLM's failure to understand the constraints associated with Mission-host country collaboration; JSI/FPLM's tendency to do the work rather than train locals one-on-one to do it; disproportionate attention to process; overemphasis on perfection (at the expense of getting something up and working); failure to adhere to plans; failure to move quickly on implementation planning; absence of commercial logistics expertise among JSI/FPLM staff; overemphasis on MIS for reporting rather than for improving logistics management; and inadequate support by senior JSI/FPLM management.

Despite generally favorable reports on field performance, there are opportunities for improvement. This is particularly true in the area of institutionalization. The perception exists in many cases that JSI/FPLM is doing too much of the logistics management work itself rather than truly institutionalizing capability within local organizations and working itself out of a job. While this apparently has not been true in the Philippines, it is undoubtedly true in Bangladesh where the project has had a long-term presence supported by a large buy-in and has consistently lacked a true focus on transferring capacity and responsibility until very recently. For example, the merits of the LMIS were described above. However, this system is currently managed by an expatriate in-

country advisor and run by local project staff. Although the operation is scheduled for immediate physical transfer to the Ministry's MIS Unit, the Unit's ability to take over the system is highly questionable. It has no programmers who know the language, and unit salaries are far below those currently paid to local JSI/FPLM staff. While plans were long under way for this physical transfer, the project had no valid, well-conceived plan for institutionalizing capacity. It has also been extremely slow in institutionalizing capacity within its own staff, prolonging reliance on expatriate assistance, and even now lacks a solid, efficient, practical strategy toward this objective.

Another area requiring attention is the relative level of effort devoted to assessment and planning versus actual technical assistance. A number of interviewees expressed concern about the amount of time JSI/FPLM devotes to planning, questioning how much and what kind of analysis is needed to make programming decisions. Given the scarcity of dollars available and the expected increase in demand, the project might be well advised to review its approach with an eye toward increasing the efficiency of the planning process to raise the proportion of resources devoted directly to assistance service delivery.

A related concern is a potential over-commitment to perfection, or to a theoretical standard which exceeds both the requirements and the capabilities of client countries. There is a feeling in some quarters that the project strives toward perfect systems in countries which do not really need them and, in any event, could never support them. There are conditions under which a simpler, quicker, and more adaptable approach would be beneficial. While attention should not be diverted from quality, some situations may call for more expeditious implementation of changes in the weakest system links that could be accomplished in less time and with fewer external resources. These kinds of changes, while not all-encompassing, could have a positive impact on the logistics system and greater potential for institutionalization than those that are more ambitious.

3.4 Training

JSI/FPLM reports training about 8,000 people directly and fostering the training of about 20,000. Trainees include logistics system staff, trainers, and staff of USAID, other donors, and collaborating agencies. Training is also provided to CDC and JSI project staffs. Training takes place both in-country and at programs presented in the Washington area. The JSI/FPLM training staff has grown exponentially, from 1.6 full-time equivalents at contract inception to 5.5 FTEs now funded by both the core contract and buy-ins, plus a short-term consultant working almost full-time in 1994.

To support its training activities, the project has developed and/or modified curricula for trainers, logistics system staff, advisors, and USAID and Cooperating Agency staffs. In addition, country-specific materials have been developed, including those for Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Mexico. These materials are subject to ongoing review and revision based on trainee feedback as well as trainer experience during deliveries. There is considerable collaboration with CDC/FPLM in training material development as well as delivery.

JSI/FPLM's in-country training strategies include the following:

- Direct logistics management training delivery.
- Training central level trainers in training techniques.
- Training regional level trainers in training techniques.
- Reviewing curriculum and training materials developed locally.
- Developing curriculum and training materials for host-country review and revision.
- Developing and/or supporting local training institutions.

Trainees, both for training-of-trainers and logistics management training, are generally selected by the host country or institution in collaboration with JSI/FPLM, based on jointly established guidelines.

Some project training is based on training needs assessments, such as the 1993 assessment for the General Directorate of Family Planning in Mexico, the 1993–94 assessment in Bangladesh, and a survey of USAID staff CPT-related training needs. However, in some cases the project has been responsive to training demands identified by a Mission or country institution rather than to specific training needs documented by assessments, with its response generally dictated by the availability of training resources. As a result, and beyond the project's direct control, training has often been offered before the logistics management system was in place. After an infusion of technical assistance or local efforts to define the system's procedures and forms, retraining was sometimes required specific to these procedures and forms. This was the case at MEXFAM where system problems were identified during the training and solutions developed later. The absence of formal needs assessments can also affect the choice of trainees. At MEXFAM, for example, the target trainees were heads of logistics centers rather than warehouse personnel, and the trainees did not transfer their knowledge to the warehouse workers. As MEXFAM has closed some of its smaller logistics centers, much of the training has been lost to the organization.

The project's general training philosophy reflects the facilitation concept, with trainers as facilitators rather than imparters of technical knowledge and skills. While the curricula present general theory and principles of logistics management, the assumption is that sufficient expertise resides among the trainees to apply these principles and solve problems unique to their own settings.

Training quality control resides primarily in the Training Function Group and peer review, reflecting the project's general management style. Increasing involvement of logistics advisors in various review activities is strengthening the link between the project's technical assistance and training components. It also ensures that curriculum revisions reflect experience gained during technical assistance visits. Other quality control mechanisms include pre- and post-testing, end-of-training evaluation by trainees, use of a centrally developed training evaluation tool, and trip reports. There is also considerable supervision by the senior training coordinator, who tracks progress against plans and monitors staff allocation through a card system. Use of indicators has been limited in training as well as in other project components. However, there has been some monitoring of number of months without stock-outs, number of months with over-stocks, quantities of expired products, percentage of timely and accurate logistics reports, and use and availability of inventory control methods.

The project uses three main methods to institutionalize training capacity: (1) training local trainers within the logistics management system who then train others down the line; (2) subcontracting with local institutions; and (3) developing local institutional capacity. The first is the most common and apparently the most successful. This was the strategy with Direccion General de Planificacion Familiar (DGPF) in Mexico, where training began at the central level and then proceeded to regional and state levels, with local personnel taking increased responsibility for training delivery as the program moved downward through the system. Bangladesh is an example of the second, where the project subcontracted with a local firm. However, bidders were required to give first right of refusal to trainers who had been on the FPLM/Dhaka staff. In effect, this limited the bidders' capacity to recruit more qualified and experienced personnel. While the current subcontractor is competent in training delivery, it is not competent in training design, needs assessment, or evaluation, and JSI/FPLM staff is still performing these functions.

Discussion. The project takes great care with its training activities and has a strong methodological approach. In general, field reports on training are positive. Trainers develop training skills, and logistics management trainees learn principles of logistics management. In many cases, this is their first exposure to these principles. However, some express an interest in more practical, hands-on training. Storekeepers in Bangladesh, for example, reported that most of the training was quite generic and did not provide instruction in day-to-day storekeeping. They wanted more instruction on how to receive a shipment or report a missing box than on the theory of accounting and the relationship between accounting and first in-first out or first expired-first out procedures. They also felt the training lacked focus on exactly what system or procedures to use, what to do when on-the-job problems arise, and which solutions are acceptable within the confines of their country's system and its bureaucratic and operational requirements. In other words, they expressed less concern with all of the elements in the logistics management cycle than with the specifics of their jobs, and they did not feel that the trainers were able to address these specifics. There were similar reports in Mexico.

While the general, theoretical, principle-based training is useful, it may not always be the best use of resources by the project or its beneficiaries. Ideally, each training program and set of materials should be tailored to each country's system. To some extent they are. Clearly, project resources are insufficient to do this thoroughly in all countries, but it may be feasible where there are large buy-ins, such as Bangladesh. In other places, more aggressive outreach to local training capabilities might result in other resources that could do the tailoring work. Another strategy to improve the balance between theory and practice would be to have a local technical expert, from within or outside of the public logistics management system, join the training team as a technical resource who can help trainees apply the principles. While the concept of trainers as facilitators is valid in many environments and is theoretically sound, it may be inefficient and ineffective in many of the countries in which the project works. Trainees in these countries do know the local terrain and, in some ways, are the best people to decide how principles should be applied. However, many of them have absolutely no experience in well-running systems and little context into which to slot new learning. Therefore, they might benefit greatly from contact with experienced individuals who have faced and solved similar problems using approaches that are feasible, practical, and affordable under local conditions. PROFAMILIA in Colombia used this strategy in non-FPLM training, where one segment involved transporting trainees to a local commercial warehouse not just to observe operations, but also to get practical advice from warehouse personnel. JSI/FPLM

could expand its training cadre by picking up local experts in-country or making arrangements with local facilities to serve as hands-on training sites.

Another strategy to enhance training effectiveness is to improve the relationship and balance between technical assistance and training, restricting training to those situations in which technical assistance has assured that all elements, including forms and procedures, are in place and training needs have been well defined. JSI/FPLM training staff recognizes this need. However, there are some instances in which this is beyond the project's control. As noted above, for example, a Mission or host-country institution may request training without a training needs assessment and/or well before the forms and procedures have been established, and CLM may determine that the request be serviced. This was apparently the case at MEXFAM. Close cooperation between CLM and JSI/FPLM in assuring that the beneficiaries are ready for training would take better advantage of limited training resources.

A review of the length of training would also be useful. Because the training is cycle-oriented and incorporates the principles of general logistics management, it is generally relatively long. In systems with already constrained staffs, time off from the job disrupts system operations. This is particularly true where multiple donors are providing multiple inputs to the same systems. In Bangladesh, for example, one donor representative estimated that family planning system managers, including those in the logistics component, may spend up to 25 percent of their time attending various donor-sponsored training programs. Focusing logistics management training on the specific knowledge and skills trainees need to perform their jobs might result in shorter programs that are more useful and less expensive both for JSI/FPLM and for the beneficiaries.

Institutionalization of training capacity has worked very well when the partner institution participates in curriculum design and there is a phased, multilevel approach to training. This was the case with DGPF in Mexico. Project inputs have effectively enhanced local training capacity that is reaching all levels in the system. This kind of approach should continue. The training subcontract in Bangladesh may be an anomaly and should not, in its entirety, provide a model for other project countries. Despite the project's claim of "localization" rather than institutionalization, this subcontract does not effectively represent any real transfer of responsibility from the project to another organization. JSI's loyalty to its own staff is commendable, but bidders on the subcontract might have been able to identify and recruit far more qualified staff persons capable of carrying out a wider range of training-related functions. Since subcontract salaries are reportedly lower than those of JSI/FPLM/Dhaka, a more competent subcontractor staff could have reduced project costs in-country. Also, there would have been far less need for expensive expatriate assistance from the home office. Future subcontracting efforts should result in less dependent arrangements.

As in the technical assistance area discussed earlier, the level of perfection toward which JSI/FPLM strives in its training activities may be a problem. Obviously, this is in many ways an asset and reflects JSI/FPLM's project-wide commitment to quality. Staff members continually revise their own materials and review those of others in efforts to improve their products. The concern centers around the amount of time devoted to product design and development (as opposed to direct service delivery) and its associated cost. It appears that the effort on planning and design is disproportionate. The task-related cost data developed as a result of the project's response to Recommendation 1 in Chapter 2 will help shed light on this question.

3.5 Quality Assurance

Most of the project's quality assurance activities have been carried out by PATH staff within JSI/FPLM. Early on, JSI/FPLM began work on a quality assurance reference manual. Eventually, a determination was made that this material should be incorporated into existing CDC materials, and the project developed guidelines for visual inspection of supplies in-country. These guidelines are now included in the Logistics Guidelines. They have also been incorporated into the training curriculum. In addition, JSI/FPLM has developed numerous fact sheets with broad potential use.

An evaluation of three U.S. testing laboratories was carried out under the project. The project also conducted technical assistance visits to Pakistan to develop a practical QA program for an overstock of condoms and to Guatemala for refresher training for laboratory staff.

Prior to the start of FPLM, PATH developed a Condom Quality Index (CQI), which is a measure of condom quality that goes beyond a simple "accept" or "reject" decision. This index was adopted by USAID. Managers can decide to expedite distribution of affected condoms before they deteriorate to the point of being unsuitable for use based on downward shifts of air burst volumes. Related efforts under FPLM include refining and validating the tool and working further with sampling methodologies. These efforts have helped to make the CQI a better management tool. Using core and AIDS buy-in funds, JSI/FPLM developed the "Model Countries" effort to assess the feasibility, cost, and impact of selected logistics and QA interventions on project quality. As background, the project prepared logistics profiles for Jamaica, Kenya, and Malawi, and later at CLM's request for Guatemala and Niger. CLM determined that further activity along these lines is not a priority, given other demands for assistance.

Quality assurance is often a part of JSI/FPLM country assessments and general logistics technical assistance. Areas with a quality assurance focus include visual inspection of goods, development of policies for complaint management, and determination of appropriate procedures when problems are discovered. The project has also consulted in quality assurance policy development as part of the graduation process when countries begin to procure their own commodities and need to consider acceptance testing.

In addition, JSI/FPLM has looked at complaint ladders to determine the validity of levels of complaints. The major issues are how to monitor complaints and how to determine the level or severity of complaints requiring additional actions, such as sampling for testing. JSI/FPLM has proposed developing guidelines on these issues, but it appears now that CDC/FPLM will probably take the lead.

Discussion. There has been considerable conflict between CLM and JSI/FPLM in the quality assurance area. The PMT did not take the initiative to resolve it. It appears that the project's philosophy differs from that of CLM, and that quality assurance activities within the project have often proceeded at odds with USAID's policy and priorities. This has sometimes been wasteful of resources. For example, the reference manual was dropped in favor of inclusion of a module in the Logistics Guidelines, plans for a video were dropped, and a simple request by CLM for information about handling infestation in a warehouse resulted in a major treatise far out of proportion to CLM's inquiry. Also, some interventions proposed, such as the ideas in the model country papers, appear too costly, and they may require far too much sophistication, both technologically and conceptually,

for successful implementation in most USAID-supported countries. It is essential that the project and CLM reach consensus on the philosophy that should prevail within project activities. As USAID is the client and funder, it would seem that the agency should provide the philosophical leadership in this segment of the project.

Despite some false starts, the project has made important contributions in the quality assurance arena and clearly has the potential to do more. Future quality assurance efforts should be tied more closely to management of family planning and AIDS logistics systems, producing interventions that are practical and transferable within the developing country context. This was the case with the visual inspection guidelines described above. Also, there may be a need for simple instructional materials, less comprehensive than the infestation manual, helping managers solve common problems. Pragmatism can underline assistance in the policy arena as well, emphasizing policies that truly aid logistics management and do not hinder distribution of acceptable products.

3.6 Innovations

From a technical standpoint, logistics is a relatively mature science, therefore technical innovations are not common. However, the public sector programs with which JSI/FPLM works are generally somewhat archaic, and the project has introduced innovations which are new to this sector. Examples include the following:

- The COCOPLAN forecasting tool facilitates the use of demographic data. While similar to the TARGET model, COCOPLAN is more useful for developing projections in countries with multiple programs. However, it is less well known and less used.

- The NEWCPT program is linked to the NEWVERN database, making it easier to account for recent and planned shipments of commodities in determining needs. This also facilitates updating CLM records using current CPTs.

- CPTEST software was developed as a screening mechanism for comparing CPT projections with known demographic data.

- In Bangladesh, the project introduced a continuous inventory process that can replace a cumbersome, expensive, nationwide annual inventory, although government regulations still require the latter.

- The LMIS developed in Bangladesh has helped diminish supply imbalances. The reporting formats are quite innovative, with the visual presentation facilitating a quick understanding of the relationship among supplies and various elements in the supply system.

Discussion. Many of the countries in which JSI/FPLM works are not ready for major technical innovations. The infrastructure, commitment to public sector family planning, and/or the professional skills of staff are limited.

There are at least three levels at which innovations may occur. The first is purely technological, and JSI/FPLM has made some contributions at this level, as noted above. Despite the relative maturity of the logistics field, major system innovations are still being developed as a result of the dramatic increase in capacity to process information. The project has taken advantage of some of these opportunities. Nevertheless, its tendency to create fully integrated systems may constrain its innovative directions. Simpler, less complex tools allow greater risk in trying new ideas. There is still opportunity for innovation in this area by designing simple, single-purpose tools, such as a simpler CPT program for use in the field requiring virtually no training or contact with the project office.

The second level relates to intervention strategies. These would be innovative approaches to improve systems or to enhance or hasten system improvements. At this level, JSI/FPLM has introduced the concept of multi-organizational, multidisciplinary planning workshops to garner support for coordinated system improvements and develop local ownership of the outcome. For example, in Kenya there was a systems development workshop involving multiple levels within the current system as well as interested donors and NGOs. This consensus-building workshop cleared up many existing differences of opinion, leading to much wider acceptance of system changes.

The third level is practical, procedural, and/or tactical. Examples would include introducing a practicum component into training by taking trainees to points in a commercial distribution system, showing them alternative ways to do things under less than ideal conditions, and making qualified staff members available to answer questions about general practice rather than theory. The project's performance at this level appears constrained by its reluctance to move outside the public sector and the international family planning community to glean new ideas. Every developing country has successful private distribution systems delivering high-volume personal commodities, many of which need special handling to prevent product damage, melting, water damage, and the like. Some of the innovations at this level already developed by practitioners in the field could be easily transferable to public sector family planning logistics systems. Surely, they will reflect adaptations to some of the adverse conditions under which these systems work. Greater outreach to the commercial and, to some extent, academic worlds might reveal practical, real world techniques that would assist project beneficiaries.

3.7 Incorporation of Private Sector Methods and Standards

The basis for logistics management was defined decades ago by military material management theory, with both manual and automated LMISs following these proven designs. The project generally reflects this theory in its training and technical assistance activities.

Other than this, the project's attention to private sector developments and resources has been very limited. For example, the software developed for forecasting in Indonesia and Thailand was derived directly from JSI's work with Polaroid about 15 years ago.[4] As another example, the

[4]Repeated inquiries by the evaluation team yielded no other JSI/FPLM-related outcomes from the relationship with Polaroid and no information on any more recent relationship with that corporation.

contraceptive product defect classification schemes and sampling plans are based on International Standards Organization (ISO) standards, and private industry has made significant contributions to developing these standards. Project-developed procurement manuals and guidelines reflect standard practices in international commerce. Inventory control procedures covered in training and other project materials are also drawn from commercial settings.

Discussion. There is no evidence of systematic outreach by the project to the private sector, either commercial or academic. Project staff apparently does track new technological developments and correctly maintains that many of these are inappropriate to the environments in which the project works. However, the project could benefit from better familiarity with the practical approaches and solutions used by commercial enterprises that project need and demand for, acquire, move, store, and distribute products successfully within these environments. These practical techniques are generally the result of extensive on-the-ground experience and the collective knowledge and experience of commercial staff. Also, they are generally feasible and sustainable, given local conditions and resources. Since there is no commercial experience among current project staff except for three local hires, the project could benefit from broader exposure to workable alternatives already developed and tested by others. These alternatives reside most often in in-country operations, not in the international donor community, USAID contractors, professional publications, or U.S. and international trade and professional organizations.

3.8 Graduation

There is no clear definition of "graduation," nor does CLM provide specific direction for a clear effort or priority on graduation. Common use of the term in the USAID context implies that a graduated country no longer requires USAID-donated contraceptives or other USAID assistance services to maintain the country's commitment and ability to provide effective and affordable family planning services. It also implies sustainability and institutionalization of managerial, training, and operational capacity. As new assistance needs evolve, such a country would select and purchase its own assistance services. Also, a graduated country would make its own commodity acquisitions with its own funds. Given international pricing structures, these acquisitions might be made from non-US sources.

In preparing a country for graduation, JSI/FPLM could be asked for assistance in any area of the logistics management cycle, including procurement. Project staff points out that the use of USAID funds to train local staff in procurement that results in acquisitions from non-US sources could be problematic and are therefore justifiably uncomfortable in this area without further policy clarification from CLM.

Nevertheless, the project has been able to undertake activities that help countries move toward lesser dependence on donors for donated contraceptives as well as for training and technical assistance, as described earlier in this chapter, and a number of these countries are near or at graduation. For example, Mexico is expected to graduate from reliance on donor-provided contraceptives (except for AIDS prevention) by 1995, and JSI/FPLM has provided a package of training and technical assistance activities that facilitate logistics system management in both public and NGO sectors. The project has also provided technical assistance in Turkey, Jamaica,

Morocco, and Ecuador. Technical documents developed in conjunction with this assistance include a procurement reference manual and a procurement decision-maker's guide.

As another example, JSI/FPLM has drafted an "Outline for Family Planning Program Case Studies for Contraceptive Self-Reliance." This was used as a basis for working with the Government of Zimbabwe (GOZ), now in the initial stages of moving toward contraceptive self-sufficiency. In 1993, the GOZ purchased 21 percent of its demand for oral contraceptives (the method of choice among 80 percent of users) with a planned increase to 25 percent in 1994. JSI/FPLM provided assistance on contraceptive pricing and procurement. It also prepared a study on local production to provide background information for investors and identify factors affecting the decision by a private company to invest in a local contraceptive manufacturing plant.

Discussion. Relatively few countries in the FPLM portfolio are at or near graduation as defined above. Assistance in these countries has addressed graduation both directly, as in Zimbabwe, Chile, Turkey, Jamaica, Morocco, and Ecuador, and indirectly, as in Mexico. Indirect support includes activities that prepare the system to operative effectively but are unrelated to new tasks, such as independent procurement, specific to graduation status. If CLM seeks further attention to graduation-specific assistance, it must clarify its definition of graduation and resolve the conflicts cited by JSI/FPLM inherent in independent procurement advice, preparation, and assistance. This is related to the need to clarify the concept of institutionalization, as suggested earlier in this chapter.

3.9 Collaboration

JSI/FPLM is extremely proactive in its outreach to Cooperating Agencies, other donors, and related organizations. These activities are not restricted to collecting data for the PPD. In addition to inviting outsiders to project meetings, project staff routinely participate in meetings sponsored by others. The project also offers a wide range of training and technical assistance to these organizations. This has helped raise the visibility of the logistics management component in the family planning community. It has also created a significant increase in the logistics-related knowledge and skills within this community. The level of collaboration has been high both in the U.S. and in-country.

As a function of overall FPLM project design, there is considerable collaboration between JSI/FPLM and CDC/FPLM, taking a variety of forms. For example, new staff members of both organizations are trained jointly with jointly developed materials. Staff members collaborate in developing products such as the Logistics Guidelines, the Forecasting Cookbook underway, and training curricula. Where Missions permit larger teams, staff members from both organizations participate in field visits. There is a jointly sponsored JSI/CDC Annual Retreat for all staff members. CDC/FPLM staff members also participate in Function Group activities, especially those related to training, as available.

Discussion. Feedback from CDC/FPLM about the collaboration is mixed. In large part, CDC consultants praise the competency of many JSI/FPLM staff members and report cordial working relationships between the two institutions. However, they note some philosophical differences that

are viewed as impediments. For instance, CDC is a government organization with no potential to expand its scope of activities and therefore no interest in creating work for itself. CDC staff believes that JSI, as a private, competitive organization, seems to seek opportunities for additional JSI activities and thus compete with CDC for work in new countries. CDC views a competitive spirit as counter-productive. There is some overlap between CDC and JSI skills, but there are also some differences, and these differences in some cases should dictate the assignment. Also, there are some situations in which CDC's status as a government agency rather than a contractor is beneficial. Many Ministry of Health officials have had previous experience with CDC in government-to-government exchanges through other CDC programs. Many feel comfortable with CDC because it is, like ministries, a government agency. Also, CDC's institutional reputation in epidemiology confers status on its staff.

JSI/FPLM's management style and Function Group concept have also been somewhat problematic in CDC/FPLM's view. While CDC staff members are invited to participate, they often are not available to travel to Washington. When they do attend, they report that the meetings are too large, with many JSI staff members still relatively new on the learning curve and unable to contribute productively. While admiring JSI's philosophy of staff development and encouraging creativity, CDC consultants do not really believe that all staff members are equally capable of contributing to technical discussion. In their view, the Function Group meetings are too long, too diffuse, and an inefficient method for making decisions and developing deliverables in a timely manner. They express particular dissatisfaction with the slow pace of the Forecasting Cookbook which they believe is a valuable tool for the field.

The evaluation team did not interview representatives of other organizations, if any, working with JSI/FPLM in the Function Group context. There were no reports of collaboration difficulties reported by organizations interviewed in Mexico or Bangladesh, where the Function Group concept does not apply and there is no apparent knowledge of the project's particular management philosophy.

There is no factual basis upon which to generalize from the CDC experience. However, if FPLM III involves more organizations in U.S.-based technical collaboration or incorporates into the project individuals who believe that not all technical matters are appropriately subject to deliberation by people with greatly varying levels of expertise, there may be a need to develop several methods of problem-solving within the project rather than just one. Time is an important consideration here. Staff persons from other organizations may, like CDC, have too many obligations of their own to spend time in unnecessarily long or overly frequent discussions.

3.10 Recommendations

All of the foregoing discussion indicates a project with significant strengths, tremendous adaptability to changing priorities and environments, and a commitment to quality service. It also suggests opportunities for improvement, some of which build on existing strengths and others that introduce new approaches designed to increase effectiveness and efficiency and broaden the project's point of view. The five recommendations below address fundamental elements rather than specific technical areas or methodologies. The resulting fundamental improvements will enhance impact

and assist both JSI/FPLM and CLM in making the most of remaining resources. The recommendations also constitute guidance for CLM and the successful bidder in FPLM III.

2. Recommendation: **CLM and JSI/FPLM should establish a clearer understanding and definition of project and country strategies, reflecting a clearer understanding of how they differ from existing work plans.**

3. Recommendation: **JSI/FPLM strategies and plans should evidence a clear commitment to institutionalization and should stimulate the development of systems and procedures that are realistically sustainable within the local environment. Examples of areas in which such attention could be placed are the following:**

- **Developing a strategy to transfer capability to prepare CPTs in more client countries.**
- **Transferring the full training process, including needs assessment, design, delivery, and evaluation.**
- **Designing management systems with local takeover in mind.**

4. Recommendation: **JSI/FPLM planning should result in country interventions that reflect better balance and coordination between training and technical assistance.**

5. Recommendation: **JSI/FPLM should introduce a more practical, hands-on emphasis into its in-country training and technical assistance activities.**

6. Recommendation: **JSI/FPLM should refine its resource allocation procedures to improve the balance between planning and implementation of services.**

4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR FPLM III

The Scope of Work poses a number of questions about future directions for FPLM III. In addressing these questions, the evaluation team has considered not only the experience and performance of JSI/FPLM II, but also a variety of factors that affect USAID, other donor programming, and developments within the countries benefiting from FPLM assistance. This chapter contains five recommendations in response to these questions and describes the rationale behind each. It does not address FPLM III needs for methods to increase awareness of the importance of sound supply management among program managers and policy-makers. This is an area in which the current project has been extremely effective already. New approaches to increasing awareness are not a priority in FPLM III.

There is one question which the team cannot answer. This relates to the magnitude of funding that should be allocated to FPLM III. There is evidence of a growing demand for logistics assistance services from the field. In addition, as NEWVERN has developed and become institutionalized, FPLM could engage in useful analyses of the database in addition to its management, thus providing additional services to CLM. The project has exceeded its numerical deliverable requirements in some areas and appears on target in others. With CLM's concurrence, project staffing has increased substantially to handle the workload. One consequence of this increased staffing is that the project will reach its level of effort ceiling several months before the project is scheduled to end. It will not, however, exceed its budget ceiling.

Clearly, there is a continuing need for family planning and AIDS logistics assistance, and there should be an FPLM III. However, the evaluation team is unable, for two reasons, to estimate the magnitude of funding that should be allocated under FPLM III. First, country needs or desires for assistance could constitute, essentially, a bottomless pit. This is particularly true given the growing potential for integration of family planning logistics with HIV/AIDS and other health logistics operations (see section 4.3 below). Even without these kinds of new developments, many countries continue to have extremely weak logistics systems that could benefit from project services. The team has no way of measuring true requirements. Based on requests now on hold at JSI/FPLM, it is reasonable to conclude that there is a backlog and that such a backlog will persist for some time. However, it is not reasonable to believe that USAID, now engaging in various aspects of downsizing and facing increasing financial limitations (as are other donors), can ever fully meet the demand. As in the past, the Agency is faced with developing criteria on which it must base decisions to provide assistance. One reporting Mission states that it desires greater logistics assistance but would prefer to engage its own contractor rather than call on the resources of FPLM. Thus, there may be other ways for USAID to meet greater demand without increasing the size and scope of FPLM.

Second, there remains a question as to the efficiency of current operations, as indicated in Chapter 2. It may be that the project can realign some of its internal operations to become more productive. If this is so, a greater level of service can be expected of a project the same size. Because of the backlog and because continuing requests for service are anticipated, the objective of the

recommended inquiry into management operations should not be to see if the same work can be done by fewer people, but rather to find ways to increase the level of service with the same resources. JSI/FPLM's project management advocates more money to support expanded activities. In general, of course, more money does mean more work can be done. However, until certain questions are answered about the efficiency of current operations, the wisdom of an increased investment is unclear. In Bangladesh, for example, which is the project's largest buy-in by far, insufficient funding does not explain lack of progress in institutionalization, nor does it explain the slow development of the LMIS. Indeed, to get where it is now, the Bangladesh activity should have cost far less, and many of the factors affecting progress were well within JSI/FPLM's control.

4.1 Expanding the Project's Logistics System Mandate

FPLM has established a comprehensive model of logistics management centered around the LMIS and includes forecasting, stores management and inventory control, distribution and transport, quality assurance, supervision, and training. The project has provided assistance in all components, focusing efforts sometimes on the weakest links and sometimes on specific tasks designated as priorities by the Mission or local institutions. Feedback from a significant number of Missions reveals that there are a number of areas in which FPLM does not provide assistance but are nevertheless critical to the establishment of a solid supply management system. Project staff also recognizes the importance of these components that are now outside the project's mandate. Foremost among these are facilities, such as warehouses and other storage structures, and material transportation requirements. The Missions citing these needs believe that other inputs, such as systems design and training, are relatively futile until these other elements of the system are functioning satisfactorily. Therefore, the team recommends that FPLM III broaden the range of activities in which the project can engage. While it is unlikely that FPLM III could support major infrastructure construction or purchases, it might support modest equipment purchases as well as technical advice.

7. Recommendation: **CLM should ensure that FPLM III takes a broader view of logistics management, allowing support for a wider range of activities, including such areas as facilities improvement and transportation needs.**

4.2 Changes to Assess Impact and Promote Sustainability

JSI/FPLM II performance is measured primarily on the basis of outputs, such as numbers of people trained, number of countries receiving intensive or *ad hoc* assistance, and so forth. While these factors are easy to measure, they provide no information about quality or impact. This is not the fault of the project. These indicators were established by USAID and are the benchmarks contained in the contract. JSI/FPLM staff recognizes its limitations and has participated actively in the Commodities and Logistics Working Group of The EVALUATION Project to identify indicators of a functioning contraceptive logistics system.

Reliance on these output measures seems to arise from a series of assumptions. For example, it appears that training is assumed to institutionalize local system management capacity. Bangladesh is one example where this assumption appears to be correct, as stock-outs have been greatly reduced. However, there may be other factors that contribute to these improvements as well, and there are no hard data attributing the improvements to training alone. As another example, technical assistance and facilitation in sponsoring system design workshops is assumed to result in a design that reflects ownership of the participants and is therefore viable and sustainable. While these assumptions may be reasonable, they have not been tested, and there is some evidence in some countries that impact is disproportionately low compared to project inputs.

Definitive impact indicators would help CLM, the project, and recipient countries and organizations evaluate project services as well as progress on the ground. Great care needs to be taken in establishing these indicators because of the attribution issue suggested above. Many countries are receiving a variety of simultaneous inputs into the system, including training, technical assistance, infrastructure development (such as warehouse construction), equipment (such as trucks and forklifts), and others. In many cases, it is difficult to attribute an improvement to one input versus another. Also, the project's impact may be negatively affected by problems beyond its control. For example, if estimators, managers, and storekeepers are well trained but there is a major breakdown in equipment and a shortage of parts, stock-outs may occur despite the qualifications of staff to avoid them. Therefore, whatever performance indicators are established must be accurate and attributable, and they must prevent the project from being adversely judged because of factors beyond its control.

If USAID continues to pursue the goal of sustainability, then it needs to define the term precisely and develop associated impact indicators. For example, is a program sustainable when there is a sufficient pool of qualified local personnel to run it, or it is sustainable only when the local government can both run and finance it independently? Does independence mean independence from USAID or from all donors? The attribution question is also important here. In Bangladesh, for example, little progress has been made despite a substantial long-term, on-the-ground project presence. However, this lack of progress is attributable to lack of resources within the government as well as to project activities. If project performance is to be measured in sustainability terms, mechanisms must be established to isolate the project's span of control from those of others.

8. Recommendation: **CLM should establish performance measures rather than deliverables and output measures to help guide and evaluate the project.**

4.3 Promoting Linkages with Other Aspects of Family Planning, Reproductive Health, and HIV/AIDS Programs

FPLM II has already begun services in the AIDS logistics arena. This has been a valuable step forward because of the tremendous risk in uncoordinated projections by family planning and HIV prevention programs. Also, in countries with already serious resource constraints, it is wasteful to duplicate all of the distribution and supply system elements.

The number of countries converting from vertical to integrated health service systems at the operational level is increasing. In these countries, support for integrated programs would be more appropriate to the environment. Also, it would help strengthen coordination between donors supporting separate parts of the integrated system and would help maximize the benefit of all donor resources.

There are some practical challenges in explicitly broadening the mandate of FPLM to provide assistance in integrated programs. One challenge is tracking the use of so-called family planning dollars. Another is ensuring that functioning, already taxed family planning logistics systems are not overwhelmed by the infusion of numerous other commodities. However, these are not insurmountable problems, and there is significant benefit to be gained. In extending the mandate, CLM may wish to establish criteria governing decisions about providing integrated support. For example, these criteria might reflect on-the-ground system characteristics, the level of development within family planning and other logistics systems, and the potential for joint donor support of integrated assistance. In any event, avenues should be open for FPLM III to work in this arena as appropriate.

9. Recommendation: **USAID should continue its initiative to link logistics support for HIV/AIDS prevention with logistics support for contraceptives. In countries where integration is desirable or under way, FPLM III should be permitted to provide support to integrated systems.**

4.4 Linking Field Assistance Activities with Central Database Programs

Housing NEWVERN and the field assistance component under one project roof has benefited both components. The CPT process is basic to the integrity of the database system and USAID's overall contraceptive management requirements. Interaction between NEWVERN and field assistance staff within JSI/FPLM has continually increased. The growing involvement of the NEWVERN staff in CPT peer review has increased understanding on both sides and should improve data quality. Further, advisors need the most recent data when they travel to the field on CPT visits. While in-

house access is not required, it is certainly more convenient. The joining of these elements within the project umbrella has worked well, and there are no clear reasons to change it.

The PPD is another matter. There is no inherent linkage between maintenance of this database and other project activities. Project staff argues that this function promotes collaboration with other collaborating agencies, but the project's outreach to these agencies is extensive in its own right and does not depend on responsibilities related to the PPD. Further, even if PPD data are useful in other JSI/FPLM activities, in-house access is no special advantage. In sum, the PPD was and continues to be an add-on for reasons of USAID's administrative convenience, not for reasons of substance. In deciding whether to continue this arrangement, CLM needs to investigate the cost of transferring PPD management responsibility elsewhere as well as the benefits that might be derived from focusing the project's entire attention on logistics management activities.

10. Recommendation: **There are programmatic reasons for continuing to link the NEWVERN management process with logistics management assistance under a single contract. However, the case is less compelling for the PPD. Therefore, CLM should determine whether the funding for the PPD could be better spent in direct logistics support activities.**

4.5 Increasing Commercial Supply Expertise within the Project

Chapters 2 and 3 indicate that the project has no in-house commercial supply experience and does not actively outreach to sources of this expertise. They also suggest the benefits that could be realized from bringing pragmatic developing country experience of this type to bear. JSI/FPLM has been operating for quite some time in the relatively closed universe of USAID contractors, other Cooperating Agencies, and donors. With increasing constraints on funding and other resources everywhere, the universe needs to expand, with greater input from individuals who have overcome the kinds of problems faced in supply management in the countries in which the project works. This input is needed at the headquarters level, which shapes the project and services the field, and in regional and in-country buy-in operations. The surest way to do this is to diversify the skills and experience available within the project's staff.

11. Recommendation: **To ensure that FPLM III benefits from direct, hands-on, practical private sector logistics and material management experience in developing countries, CLM should mandate in the next Request for Proposal (RFP) that the successful offeror employ on the project a sufficient number of staff persons with this kind of experience.**